THE AFRICAN TAR BABY **KRAMER & BAILEY**

THE NATION

APRIL 30, 1977 60 cents

PRIZE-WINNING POETS—1977

REPORT FROM BEHIND THE KISSINGER CURTAIN

Any Dodge to Get 'Peace'

THE BROKEN PROMISE TO HANOI

Gareth Porter

APR 25 1977
LIB

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LETTERS

SALT talk

North Hollywood, Calif.

SALT's very name is a monumental hypocrisy. *Limitation* means, basically, a contest between Overkill plus 10 and Overkill plus 6 or 7 or 8. More fundamentally, it is a growling aspect of a contest between two imperialisms for the control of the earth's resources and populations, between two self-appointed policemen of rivaling clubs. Nuclear proliferation is not for them a moral horror; their fear is that the defenseless may arm themselves against one another and the King Kongs. *John Bright*

twenty-two years of exile

The editors have received a copy of the following letter to President Carter through the courtesy of Mr. Sam Weiss of West Palm Beach, Fla.:

Dear President Carter:

I write to you in the 22nd year of my exile from the United States, having been deported (originally to my native Britain) at the instance of Sen. Joe McCarthy for my political and moral principles. Under Section 212 of the immigration law I must "actively oppose" those principles in order to return to the country where I lived nearly all of my active life, and of which my wife and three children are citizens. (I myself qualified for citizenship in 1942 but was denied it through no fault of my own.)

My principles are not for sale, as you have indicated that yours are not since your first bid for the Presidency. Hence this shameful law condemns not only myself, but my Chicago-born wife, to lifetime exile.

We are greatly heartened by your press conference statement about human rights for politically unorthodox aliens in the United States. For the first time in decades, an American President seems to share with us—and with many Senators and Representatives who have written to us, and with *The New York Times* (editorial, Feb. 24)—our abhorrence of the political section of the McCarran-Walter immigration law.

My wife and I want to return, but we are only one among thousands of "alien" families who are thus barred from the United States. Convinced as we are that Section 212 harms the United States more than it harms individuals in our general category, we earnestly petition you to use your influence for the reform of this "relic of McCarthyism."

Cedric Belfrage
Cuernavaca, Mexico

more on Siracusa

New York City

"Siracusa, Our Man in Uruguay" [*The Nation*, Mar. 19], by Max Holland and Kai Bird, is an interesting account of Ambassador Ernest Siracusa's advocacy of the Uruguayan military government. I am afraid, however, that it does not quite "review the career" of Mr. Siracusa, as your editorial pre-note promises. I was hoping that the authors would offer some details on the earlier activities of Mr. Siracusa, who was expelled from Peru as a CIA agent, as reported by Gen. Juan Velasco. . . .

According to a Reuters dispatch published in *The New York Times* on Nov. 14, 1974, General Velasco (then President of Peru) told a press conference that Siracusa was quietly asked to leave the country when the military government, which took power in October 1968, discovered that he was a CIA agent. In 1969, Siracusa became Ambassador to Bolivia.

If General Velasco was right (and there seems to be no reason to doubt him), then the No. 2 position in the U.S. Embassy in Lima was held by a CIA agent. Of course, the CIA's use of a foreign service cover is nothing new. . . .

James R. Brockman, S.J.

EDITORIALS

Energy and National Will

Mr. Carter has initiated Strategic Energy Limitation negotiations with Congress and the powerful private interests that really run this country. They will be as protracted, complex and contentious as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty negotiations with the Russians. There is not much the American people, victims or beneficiaries of the outcome, can do to affect the contest between the government they put in office and which is supposed to represent their collective interest, and the business combines that are the most influential constituents of Congress.

In his speech to the nation on April 18 President Carter took more than passing note of this reality. Speaking of the "special interest groups . . . that will attack the part of this plan that affects them directly," he declared that "If they succeed, then the burden on the ordinary citizen, who is not organized into an interest group, would be crushing." Indeed it would be. The challenge to Carter and to Congress is not to allow that "would" to become "will." The principle involved is that the sacrifices imposed by a rational energy program must be equally shared.

That will be quite a trick. Despite our democratic creed, we are not a very egalitarian society. Social and class distinctions seem to be hardening, income inequalities rising and the sway of corporate America constantly increasing. "Trade-offs" between competing interests are the way to get things done. The government is both the umpire in these games and the representative of the great mass of unorganized players, often with little benefit to the common welfare.

Before Carter gave his very stark picture of the energy situation, what he proposed to say was referred to around the White House as "the sky is falling" speech. It was an extraordinarily inappropriate description and a very poor joke. Famously, the sky did not fall on Chicken Little; she was just an hysterical cluck. But the President said the sky would indeed fall unless the country took a series of quite drastic measures to prop it up. His message was that things are bad and could become desperate. Unless we reformed our wasteful ways, he told us, we could be fighting among ourselves at home and risking wars abroad over the world's dwindling sources of energy.

One of the most striking parts of his somber accounting was based, we are told, on a new study by the CIA, which purports to show that both Russia and China are also running out of oil and that by 1985 the Soviet Union will have changed from a net exporter of oil to a competitor for the resources of the Middle East. There is no way for outsiders to challenge the CIA when it makes flat assertions, but *The Washington Post* noted on April 19 that the intelligence agency's report "does not contain an analysis or explanation of its pessimistic outlook for Soviet and Chinese oil production." Given the recent history of the CIA in the forecasting business and the growing documentation of its record for veracity, Carter might have chosen a stronger reed to lean on.

There is no doubt, however, that the exhaustion of petroleum resources can be foreseen, and the term "crisis"

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is not too strong for that situation. The question is what will be done about it and how soon. That depends largely on how forcefully the President pushes his program and how responsibly Congress deals with it, resisting the pressures of the special interests which Carter correctly anticipates.

It is not mere flattery of the American people to say confidently that they will accept the necessary sacrifices that will be asked of them, even to a reduction in their standard of living—*if* they are convinced that the burdens are fairly distributed. It is up to the President and Congress to see that this happens. Otherwise, we will have no energy program and the United States will shortly run out of gas and national purpose at the same time.

Meany's Veto

George Meany won another famous victory the other day—a victory over common sense and the proclaimed policy of President Carter. He succeeded yet again in having the State Department refuse visas to three representatives of the Russian simulacrum of trade unions who had been invited to the longshoremen's union convention in Seattle.

The 82-year-old hierarch of the AFL-CIO has been fighting and winning the battle against any Communist infection by contact with American labor for decades now. In a quite extraordinary way he has won an absolute veto over the admission of any foreigner from a Communist land who dares to call himself a "trade unionist." The State Department routinely grants waivers of the law barring Communists from stepping across our borders to dancers, singers, actors, dentists, scientists and mere tourists. But never to a person claiming to be a union official. As Meany's probable successor, Lane Kirkland, put it to *The New York Times* recently, "There is no such thing as a Communist trade union official. They are all just rulers of labor."

That is perfectly true, as far as it goes—but it doesn't go far enough. Russians who call themselves trade unionists are in fact bureaucrats of that alien system; their job is to help the state control workers, rather than to represent them against management (which is, of course, the state).

But is that fact reason enough to keep Russians who have those jobs from contact with their free American opposite numbers (which is not to say equivalents)? Is there any danger of infecting American working people, organized or not, with the dread totalitarian virus? The opposite is more likely. The delegates from Russian "labor" will be much more apt to carry back to their closed system the bacilli of dissent that still mark American unions' rank and file, if not the sclerotic leadership of the AFL-CIO. Has Meany forgotten the old Communist tactic of boring from within? It can work both ways.

The old test for a free trade union used to be the right to strike. Russian labor fails that test. But so do the unions of south Korea and the Philippines, to name just two groups with whose leaders Meany & Co. have recently hobnobbed. So-called union leaders from dictatorships on "our side" of the cold-war barricades get a warm welcome

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from the leadership of the American labor "movement," if one can still apply that term to the aging golfers of the federation's hierarchy.

The truth is that the AFL-CIO's foreign policy and operations are in shambles. To most of the rest of the world's workers, the collars of United States' labor leadership look white, not blue. They are set in their ways and their ways are a rigid anti-communism as out of date as a Stanley Steamer. Concern for the condition of the workers of the world takes the back seat while the old cold-war crusade is in the driver's seat.

It is strange that the AFL-CIO's sterile foreign policy still works in only one place—here at home. It can still force the State Department to accept its veto against those Red foreigners. And this is so despite Carter's statement to the U.N. that "we are moving now to liberalize almost completely travel opportunities to America."

The State Department acts on the theory that, by granting Big Labor that veto, it is recognizing "the attitudes of the mainstream of American labor." Meany's whole history shows that he thinks of himself as actually *being* the mainstream, which is nonsense. He is thoroughly on the outs with Carter, who has blocked him on key appointments, on import restrictions and on raising the minimum wage. Shortly after the President named him as co-chairman, with the head of General Electric, of a body that is supposed to help check inflation, Meany thanked him by referring to him in a speech as "little Jimmy."

Carter will never manage to appease the labor federation's vain old panjandrum. He might as well stop trying, and begin instead to rationalize the way this country handles the admission of foreigners, whether or not they are Communists. That means getting the control of visas back in the hands of the duly elected government of the United States.

Diplomatic Dissident

Almost everyone has had his or her say about the free-swinging, wide-ranging, unconventional, unpredictable kind of diplomacy so publicly practiced by Ambassador Andrew Young. He himself has been one of the most articulate and extensive commentators on the Young phenomenon. Naturally, he defends his outspokenness, and with considerable eloquence. He says he will go on smashing the icons of protocol and declaring what he thinks is right and wrong with the world—especially the African part of it. President Carter has astounded the wise men and wise guys of Washington by not only failing to repudiate Young's sallies but by positively supporting them, with only minor caveats.

The other day Young compressed his diplomatic credo into words he might have uttered from one of the pulpits he once shared with Martin Luther King Jr. "If we ever believe things are impossible, then we've got nothing to live for at all," he told a meeting of the U.N. Association of the United States. "These impossible dreams make life worthwhile and I wouldn't trade them for any amount of realism, caution and protocol in the world." At another point he declared that "everything I have ever done has been controversial and naive and people have advised me against it."

Young might be described as a dissident from the norms of diplomatic behavior. Another dissident, this one from a political system, recently described himself as "a better realist than the exponents of so-called *Realpolitik*." That was the Russian exile Andrei Amalrik, writing in *The New York Times*. Applying the doctrine of speaking out on moral issues, whatever the consequences, to the realities of southern Africa, which is the "better realist," Henry Kissinger or Andrew Young?

Kissinger, once he discovered Africa, regarded it as just another cockpit for the American confrontation with Russia. *They* purported to back the continent's huge black majorities, so *we*, naturally, backed the white minorities. This disastrous "tilt" was righted a bit (one might say into the gray area) after the Portuguese empire collapsed and it became clear that white rule, in Rhodesia at least, was near its inevitable end. But the really serious problem of majority rule in South Africa was not even faced. American support of black African aspirations for independence and a better life was meager. It was more urgent to face down what Young's predecessor at the U.N., D. P. Moynihan, called the "new colonialism" of Russia.

Young, on the other hand, calls this purely anti-Communist stance "paranoid," and what better word could be found? He agreed with a description of the racist South African Government as "illegitimate"—morally accurate, whatever the international legalities say. He said the presence of Cuban troops brought "stability" to Angola, which is undoubtedly true at least of the period after the Neto faction beat our two sets of clients (the tribal turmoil would have gone on without their presence). As for the British "invention" of racism, a remark for which Young apologized handsomely, the English upper class was once well known to believe that the "wogs begin at Calais."

Andrew Young's diplomatic manner is hot, emotional and public. It stands out against the cool and secretive style it replaces. Much better adapted to the African reality, it is on the winning side and the right one. President Carter seems to know that; it is why he has stood so firmly behind his interesting and appealing ambassador to the United Nations.

Disclosure and Harassment

In the post-Watergate climate, to argue against tough laws on disclosure of political campaign contributions might seem like an attack on the American Way itself. Campaign corruption has been demonstrated ad nauseam, and such laws as the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 appear designed to stop it. Yet an argument—and a good one—against such laws is being made, and the controversy is yielding yet another glimpse of the government's attempts to silence any citizens who envision radical alterations in the system.

The Socialist Workers Party are in the process of filing papers before the Federal Election Commission seeking to have the 1971 Campaign Act declared unconstitutional

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as applied to parties, such as the SWP, that face government harassment. The action is part of a suit originally filed in 1974 by the ACLU on the SWP's behalf. The plaintiffs contend that disclosure of the names and addresses of contributors to the party would subject them to the hostile attentions of assorted gumshoes and provocateurs, right-wing fanatics and unfriendly employers, and is therefore a violation of their rights of privacy, association and free speech.

Thus far the FEC has refused to grant an exemption—a position hard to explain, since the Supreme Court ruled in 1976 (*Buckley* v. *Valeo*) that small parties which could demonstrate the probability of harassment should be exempt. "Minor parties must be allowed sufficient flexibility in the proof of injury to assure a fair consideration of their claim," stated the Court. "The proof may include, for example, specific evidence of past or present harassment of members. . . ." Given the government's forty-year history of attempts to hound the SWP out of existence, the Supreme Court might have had the party in mind.

Last January a three-judge court in Washington gave the FEC six months to construct a "full factual record" of official persecution of the SWP. It is hard to imagine why, if anyone on the commission reads the newspapers, it would take six months, since the details of the FBI's secret war on the SWP are now a matter of public record. (In the last sixteen years, by the bureau's own admission, 1,600 informers, including 316 SWP members, have been used to spy on a party of some 2,500.) And there is no reason to believe, in light of the FBI's past untruthful claims, that the SWP has ceased to be a target of federal spooks.

No doubt the FEC's stonewalling is caused partly by its reluctance to admit that the FBI cannot be trusted to keep its hands clean. But more unsettling motives can be imputed to the government: the desire to know who the party's supporters are, and the wish to make life as thorny as possible for radicals. On both the state and federal levels, the law discriminates against groups such as the SWP, setting them apart from the two major parties by making it hard for them to get on the ballot, receive subsidies, etc. But as regards campaign disclosure the FEC chastely insists that all parties are alike. That assertion is absurd; the SWP raises hardly enough money in a campaign to corrupt a dogcatcher. So the government's contrasting positions amount to a coherent policy aimed at crippling dissent.

It is time for a change in both aspects of that policy. Small parties should be treated with scrupulous equality when it comes to vote-gathering possibilities; and for reasons a child could understand, they should be viewed as special cases when it comes to privacy.

Carter's Worst Appointment

In the jargon of the CIA, William H. Sullivan has been chosen to "run" its principal agent in Iran and the Persian Gulf, who happens to be the Shah. President Carter has, shockingly, nominated Sullivan as his Ambassador to Teheran. The Senate, which, in one of Sullivan's previous incarnations, was treated with brazen contempt by this professional diplomat-agent, should reject the nomination.

One of the ominous conclusions to be drawn from the appointment of Sullivan is that the world has been divided up into fiefs for the CIA and domains for the rest of the American diplomatic establishment. Iran clearly belongs to the CIA. One recent ambassador there was Richard Helms, the former CIA director who played such a dubious role in the Watergate affair that it is said the only reason he has not been prosecuted for perjury before Congress is that it is known that he would implicate other high officials.

Going far back, it was the CIA that returned the Shah to his peacock throne in the days after World War II when the hapless Mossadegh was threatening to nationalize the oil companies. So the U.S. intelligence community and its friends at the Pentagon have been "running" Iran, through agents high and low, for a long time. Now Carter proposes to continue that sinister arrangement, with Sullivan in charge. The billions of dollars worth of arms we are selling the Shah will be safe for a while.

Sullivan's record is extraordinary and utterly disqualifying. He should never have been made ambassador to the Philippines, where he has been since 1973. From 1964 to 1969 he was ambassador to Laos (Senator Symington once called him our "military proconsul" there). During those years of the Indochina war he ran the secret army we organized in that once-tranquil little country. Our planes dropped about a million tons of bombs there in the course of that brutal and futile operation. Sullivan personally chose the targets and they included numbers of hamlets of no military value. In his testimony before Congress he managed to conceal that this bombing had gone on.

In 1969 Symington asked Sullivan if he thought the President had the legal right to order the bombing of a country with which we were not at war. "Yes sir," was his response. Four years later he broke the record for flip and cynical testimony before Congress when he answered a question about the President's authority to bomb Cambodia with this astonishing statement: "For now I'd just say the justification is the re-election of the President." It should also be noted that, while Sullivan was our Laotian proconsul, the CIA set up in that country a flourishing opium traffic which reached American soldiers in Vietnam in the form of heroin, with the disastrous results that are well known.

These facts are part of the record of the man President Carter has named to represent him, and therefore us, in Iran. He is well fitted by experience to run secret Presidential wars and to lie to Congress about them. If the Shah, whose crazily growing military force is entirely dependent on American technicians in and out of uniform, decides on a bit of a war out there in the Gulf, Sullivan is the ideal agent to help him pursue it. If it's a little question of concealing political murders by that brutally repressive regime, the President could not have picked a better man.

But if Carter means one word he has said about human rights, he could not have picked a worse man. What possible rationale can there have been for choosing William H. Sullivan as ambassador to Iran? How can the Senate find a single reason for confirming him?

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'Brainwashing' & Religious Freedom

Thomas Robbins

Accusations against the religious cults of the 1970s assert that they use "brainwashing" to divert young persons from law school or medical school to communes and monasteries. Increasingly, the state is sanctioning the forcible seizure of converts and their confinement in re-education or "deprogramming" camps like the Freedom of Thought Foundation (FTF) in Tucson, Ariz.

The term "brainwashing" is an ideal weapon for legitimating repression because: (*1*) it can never be disproved (how is the abdication of free will measured?); (*2*) it implies that authorities are concerned, not with the content of a belief but with the manner in which it was induced (they're not suppressing opinion); (*3*) it implies that devotees are passive victims of conditioning rather than seekers of meaning exercising their constitutional rights.

Recently, an indictment of two Manhattan Hare Krishna leaders for using "mind control" unlawfully to "imprison" two converts [see Robbins: " 'Deprogramming' the 'Brainwashed': Even a Moonie Has Civil Rights," *The Nation,* February 26] was dismissed by Queens County Superior Court Judge John J. Leahy. Noting the absence of physical coercion against the victims of "mind control," Judge Leahy stated that the issue was whether the converts would "be allowed to practice the religion of their choice." Sustaining the indictment would open "a Pandora's box" of "unjustified accusations and prosecutions that would go on *ad infinitum.*" Queens D.A. John Santucci, unhappy with the dismissal of the indictment, may appeal.

At the time when Judge Leahy was considering the Hare Krishna case, several parents in California were requesting custody of adult progeny "brainwashed" by the Moon movement. Judge S. Lee Vavuris was expected to grant a temporary conservatorship in an *ex parte* hearing, one in which the potential conservatees would not be permitted to contest allegations of mental incompetence. Temporary conservatorships, originally designed to protect the elderly from fraud, have been granted with increasing frequency to parents of allegedly brainwashed converts to new religious movements. To his credit, Judge Vavuris insisted on an adversary hearing.

Most of the testimony before Judge Vavuris concerned allegations that the converts had been victims of "coercive persuasion," suffering psychological damage as a result of their involvement with Moon. Dr. Margaret Singer (who had been an expert witness in Patricia Hearst's defense) testified that the Moonies exhibited blunted affect, defective memories, limited vocabulary and deficiencies in their knowledge of current events. Dr. Singer, conceding that this pattern did not fall into any standard classification of mental illness, called it a syndrome associated with "coercive persuasion," a term she used interchangeably with "brainwashing."

Her testimony was contradicted by Dr. Allan Gershon, who administered several tests to the converts and reported that their scores were in the normal range; nor did his results show blunted affect or loss of vocabulary.

Nevertheless, Judge Vavuris granted custody to the parents for thirty days, ducking, however, the issue of "brainwashing" and the mental competence of the converts. He based his decision on a concept of perpetual, absolute parental authority, even over adult progeny. The judge stated that the family tie is the "very essence of life, . . . the essence of civilization. . . . Even though the parent may be 90 and the child is 60, they are still mother and child, father and child." If this precedent stands, parents can get custody of adult children who have fallen in with Marxists, feminists or even undesirable lovers, by reason of the undermining of parental authority.

Judge Vavuris refused to bar the "deprogramming" of the conservatees or their removal from the state to the Freedom of Thought Foundation. District Court of Appeals Judge John Molinari subsequently issued a stay of Judge Vavuris's conservatorship orders, pending review. He ruled that the "children" would remain in the custody of their parents, but ordered the parents not to force deprogramming upon the conservatees. Indications are, however, that deprogramming occurred; three Moonies recanted and asked to be allowed to go to the Freedom of Thought Foundation. The two remaining conservatees complained of involuntary sessions with deprogrammers and being forced to listen to tapes. On April 11 the state court of appeals dismissed the conservatorships, thereby allowing each person to return to the church or remain with parents or deprogrammers, according to his or her present wishes. A final ruling on constitutionality of issuing conservatorships to parents desiring to have adult "cult" converts deprogrammed will be delayed until the court has studied a transcript of the lower court hearing. That may take three months. Unless the court prohibits such use of conservatorships, parents will continue to seek state authority to wean their children forcefully from religions which they do not find acceptable.

Judge Vavuris's decision has already effectively curtailed the operations of the Moon movement. Their information tables are gone from downtown Berkeley, and Moonies are worried about the possibility of being seized at any moment by deprogrammers with conservatorship orders. Meanwhile, FTF cadres are planning a nationwide expansion, with deprogramming centers to be opened in every major city. Emissaries have been sent to local churches to frighten congregations with the specter of demonic "cults," proclaiming at the same time the availability of their decisive countermeasures. Also the Vermont Senate has passed a bill, aimed at the Moon movement, which will permit judges to grant temporary conservatorships without prior adversary hearings.

In a sense, the controversy over the Moon movement is a tempest in a teapot; the Unification Church has only a few thousand American followers, has a rapid turnover (even without deprogramming), and its current net growth rate is near zero. Its "success" is primarily in the realm of financing. Its true significance may lie in the heavy-handed counterreaction it has elicited. Moon and his followers will vanish one day, but the laws and precedents that are being established to suppress them will be available for future use against other movements.

Thomas Robbins teaches the sociology of religion at Queens College, New York.

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KISSINGER'S DOUBLE-CROSS FOR 'PEACE'

THE BROKEN PROMISE TO HANOI

GARETH PORTER

This article is based on a number of talks which Gareth Porter has had recently with persons close to the U.S.-North Vietnam negotiations of 1972 and 1973. All its assertions on Kissinger's negotiations, whether as direct quotes or in the author's words, come from these conversations. In particular, Mr. Porter draws upon several interviews with an official who participated in the Paris talks and who, because he is still employed by the U.S. Government, has asked that his name not be used. —The Editors

Washington

With formal diplomatic talks between the United States and Vietnam about to start in Paris, Richard Nixon's secret pledge of $3.25 billion in postwar aid to North Vietnam, made in February 1973, is being re-examined by a Congressional subcommittee. Rep. Lester Wolff (D., N.Y.), chairman of the Asian and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee of the International Relations Committee, is planning to subpoena Henry Kissinger, if that proves necessary, in order to question him on what was promised to Hanoi, under what circumstances, and why the promise was never carried out.

Kissinger has managed until now to dismiss the issue of a secret commitment to provide postwar aid. He denied the existence of such a pledge until the Foreign Ministry in Hanoi revealed the existence of the Nixon letter to a delegation of the House Select Committee on MIAs in February 1976. Then he claimed in a private meeting with the committee that there had been no actual agreement on aid, but only an offer, made conditional on a cease-fire in Cambodia that was never achieved. Kissinger was careful, however, not to permit anyone to see the letter.

Now information from various sources, including that from an official who was directly involved in the negotiations with the North Vietnamese as an aide to Kissinger, has revealed for the first time how Kissinger negotiated an agreement to provide a major reconstruction aid program with no political strings attached as part of the Paris Agreement, and then violated that agreement by insisting on a political condition which Hanoi could not have fulfilled even if it had wanted to. This new material shows how far Kissinger and Nixon went in deceiving the American public on one of the crucial diplomatic issues in U.S.-Vietnam relations.

The secret agreement on postwar aid was the last problem to be resolved in the final round of peace negotiations in January 1973. Article 21 of the draft agreement had already pledged postwar reconstruction aid, but did not go into details or provide a mechanism for supplying the aid. Accordingly, Le Duc Tho demanded a Presidential letter spelling out more concretely the U.S. commitment. The letter was to be negotiated down to the last detail by Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.

Kissinger agreed to negotiate the text of such a letter, apparently because the North Vietnamese threatened not to sign the agreement without it. He tried to leave room for later use of postwar aid for political leverage on Hanoi by keeping the U.S. commitment as vague and conditional as possible, but Tho insisted that the letter promise postwar aid "without any political conditions."

Kissinger also wanted the letter to make it clear that the U.S. executive branch could not commit the government to any foreign aid program without Congressional approval. But Hanoi's negotiators suspected that this statement would later be cited as a basis for evading the commitment altogether and opposed any such stipulation. Finally, a compromise was struck: the letter would refer only to "constitutional processes," while a separate letter would explain Congressional prerogatives in regard to foreign assistance.

By January 23, the language of the Nixon letter was complete, except for the level of aid to be provided. Hanoi had raised its demands in January, asking compensation for the damage done by the December U.S. bombing of Hanoi. In the final session, Kissinger dismissed the importance of the specific figure to be used in the Nixon letter. "Henry told them," said the aide, "that it didn't matter what figure was put in the agreement, because it would depend on what Congress would appropriate anyway." He joked that when they had to deal with Otto Passman, they would long for Henry Kissinger. There was nevertheless hard bargaining in the final session, until the two sides agreed on a compromise figure of $3.25 billion.

Kissinger then tried once more to push Hanoi on a cease-fire in Cambodia—a demand that had been persistently rebuffed by Hanoi throughout the negotiations. He suggested to the North Vietnamese that Congressional approval of reconstruction aid would be impossible in the absence of a Cambodian cease-fire. "We told them, if you are thinking about getting any aid from Congress, you will have to produce a cease-fire in Cambodia," the aide recalls.

But this implicit threat to use the Congressional prerogatives as a way to turn the aid pledge into a political lever produced no change in Hanoi's position of noninvolvement in the Cambodian cease-fire issue. And it left intact the U.S. pledge to provide postwar aid "without any political conditions." Kissinger had to content himself with a unilateral declaration on Cambodia which threatened to resume U.S. bombing there unless the fighting stopped.

The full text of the Nixon letter to Pham Van Dong,

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dated February 1, 1973, has never been made public, despite a law which requires that the Senate be given the texts of all executive agreements signed by the United States. But excerpts read to members of the House Select Committee delegation and later published by the Hanoi newspaper *Nhan Dan* have been confirmed as accurate by one of the participants in the negotiations who has retained a copy of the letter. It refers to "principles guiding the participation of the United States in the postwar reconstruction of North Vietnam" and as its first two principles states as follows:

> (*1*) The Government of the United States of America will contribute to postwar reconstruction in North Vietnam without any political conditions.
>
> (*2*) Preliminary United States studies indicate that the programs appropriate for the U.S. contribution to the aforementioned postwar reconstruction will fall in the range of $3.25 billion grant aid over five years. Other forms of aid will be agreed upon between the two parties. This proposal will be reviewed by the governments of the U.S. and Vietnam concerning details.

In addition, the letter agreed to the establishment of a Joint Economic Commission to negotiate the "details" of the U.S. aid program and indicated that each party would act upon the recommendations of the commission "in accordance with its own constitutional processes." Then, as agreed in the Kissinger-Tho negotiations, Pham Van Dong replied to the Nixon letter with one of his own, confirming his agreement with each of the points in Nixon's letter. The exchange of letters constituted a legal commitment which was considered a codicil to the Paris Agreement. Asked about the legal status of the Nixon

Blaine, The Spectator (Hamilton, Canada)

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letter, my principal informant says, "It is clear that this was part of the agreement."

Back in Washington, however, Kissinger argued that he had not made any formal commitment on postwar aid, but merely a "statement of intent" that was not legally binding. Kissinger apparently viewed Hanoi as hamstrung by both the threat of U.S. bombing and the refusal of China and the Soviet Union to support any major offensive by the Communist forces in the South. So he saw the economic aid pledge not as a concession which he had to make to avoid a military resolution of the conflict but as a diplomatic card he could play to wrest a major concession from Hanoi.

Both Kissinger and Nixon were convinced that the Thieu regime in Saigon could not survive if the Lon Nol regime were overthrown by the Communists in Cambodia. By early March 1973, their worst fears were being realized, as an offensive by the Cambodian revolutionaries threatened to sweep the Phnom Penh government away. The Nixon-Kissinger strategy for turning back the offensive and saving Lon Nol was to combine the threat of renewed bombing against North Vietnam with the inducement of postwar aid.

As the Nixon Watergate cover-up unraveled in April and May 1973, however, the bombing option began to fade in importance. What was left to manipulate was the possibility of postwar economic aid. "Kissinger was trying," recalls his aide, "to add by means of his leverage on economic aid the missing link that he couldn't get in January—a Cambodian cease-fire."

Kissinger requested a new round of negotiations on the implementation of the agreement to begin in Paris at the end of April, first between Ambassador William Sullivan and Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, and later between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho. Kissinger authorized Sullivan to negotiate on North Vietnam's demands, including an aid program to be presented to Congress and compliance with the cease-fire by the Thieu regime. But Sullivan was to agree to these demands only on the condition that Hanoi agree to take responsibility for a cease-fire in Cambodia. The U.S. delegation, while pressing North Vietnam to name points of entry for war materiel entering South Vietnam after a cease-fire (as called for in the Paris Agreement) realized that Hanoi's refusal to be bound by the agreement's controls on resupply and reinforcement was related to Thieu's continuing military offensive. The problems of infiltration and points of entry were basically a sidelight, while Cambodia was the primary concern.

In these talks, economic aid to North Vietnam was for the first time explicitly made hostage to a Cambodian cease-fire. One of the negotiators at the meetings says: "We demanded a cease-fire in Cambodia as the price of economic aid. We told them we wouldn't be prepared to go to Congress with an agreement unless they came through with it." The condition, he adds, was reiterated "at least twenty times" during the six weeks of conversations in Paris.

Kissinger was thus posing a political condition on postwar aid, in violation of the letter from Nixon pledging that the aid would be given "without any political conditions." For there was no provision in the Paris Agreement for a Cambodian cease-fire; it was to be left to the Cambodian parties themselves to work out.

The North Vietnamese refused the demand, insisting that they did not control the Cambodian revolutionaries. "The Vietnamese told us they couldn't produce it," the

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aide recalls. "They would say quite earnestly that they would do everything possible. But they couldn't commit themselves to a settlement."

Finally, Le Duc Tho agreed to a private understanding with Kissinger that each side would do its best to promote a settlement in Cambodia, but without promising any concrete result. In short, "We got as much as we could get on Cambodia." After the June 13, 1973 communiqué was signed, Kissinger privately conceded what the Vietnamese had been saying all along: Hanoi did not, in fact, control the situation in Cambodia.

Kissinger agreed in the same communiqué to the resumption of the Joint Economic Commission talks, which were given two weeks to complete the first phase of an agreement. By the end of June, the Commission had completed its "principles and modalities" document and was ready to move to the second phase of its work: the completion of a specific aid package for submission to Congress. North Vietnamese delegation chief Dang Viet Chau submitted a series of detailed studies of North Vietnamese reconstruction needs, which the U.S. delegation estimated would cost at least $10 billion. But chiefs of the two delegations knew that the general level of grant aid had already been agreed on at the highest levels, and regarded the $3.25 billion figure as a "general guideline" for the negotiations. By mid-July, the Joint Economic Commission was nearing agreement on a proposal to be sent to Congress for a first year construction aid program. The Vietnamese delegation pressed the United States to finish the talks by July 23. But Kissinger's orders to U.S. delegation chief Maurice Williams were to get the best agreement he could—but not to sign it until he got the word.

The word never came, and it was clear by mid-July that there would be no Cambodia settlement. By that time the JEC talks were just about completed, and the American delegation had to decide "either to go ahead or cut them off," as the former Kissinger aide puts it. Kissinger ordered the delegation to return home without completing the agreement. On July 23, the two delegations issued a joint statement that the talks were being "temporarily suspended," while the negotiators reported to their respective governments. Kissinger was letting the commission die quietly.

The U.S. decision to refuse to carry out the terms of the secret agreement was not justified on the basis of alleged violations of the cease-fire by Hanoi (it was not even announced at the time). On the contrary, there was still every reason to believe that Hanoi was interested in seeing the military provisions of the agreement fully implemented. Secretary of State William Rogers testified before a Congressional committee on June 5, 1973: "We find that the North Vietnamese are conducting themselves as if they want the Paris Agreement to be carried out, and . . . in a way that suggests that they have come to the conclusion that continuation of military activities does not make sense." Rogers added that he thought Hanoi was "looking forward to programs of rehabilitation, reconstruction."

The Ford administration would later point to the Communist counteroffensive of 1974-75 as the reason why the United States refused to give postwar reconstruction aid to North Vietnam. But in fact the sequence of events was the opposite. Kissinger's refusal to keep his end of the bargain took away the last incentive which Hanoi had to maintain a defensive military posture in the South, and led ultimately to the drive that brought Saigon's collapse. It also left a diplomatic obstacle to normalization of relations which the Carter administration has not yet found a way to remove. □

THE AFRICAN TAR BABY

Bankers' Stakes in Zaire

REED KRAMER

Washington

The world financial community took note in mid-March when Dr. Irving Friedman, senior international adviser at Citibank, N.A., landed in Kinshasa, Zaire. Friedman was the architect of an unprecedented agreement signed in London last November by Zaire and its private bank creditors. His visit to Kinshasa came only two weeks after fighting had erupted in Zaire's Shaba Province (formerly Katanga), a turn of events that convinced many bankers that their $500 million in loans to that beleaguered nation were as good as lost.

Zaire's foreign debts now total about $3 billion. That's a small portion of the estimated $160 billion indebtedness of all the less-developed countries (LDCs) that do not export oil. But the bankers' concern focuses less on the size of Zaire's deficit than on the precedent which a complete default there might create.

Months before the present crisis, representatives of several large U.S. banks went to Capitol Hill to quietly appeal for additional foreign aid to Zaire which they feared even then would need significant outside help to avoid bankruptcy. "They want us to bail them out

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when their profits get into trouble," complained one key Senate aide. Another pointedly referred this reporter to a recent House Banking Committee study on foreign bank loans; it warned: "U.S. government policies might be disproportionately shaped by the need to protect the U.S. banking system from a major default by a given country."

Whether Zaire's precarious financial position has significantly influenced the Carter administration's response to the latest African challenge is not yet known, but diplomats and bankers alike are worried. The banks' negotiations with Zaire last year were the first between a defaulting LDC and commercial lenders. Governments, by contrast, have shown themselves willing to reschedule LDC debts, which is what eleven industrialized nations agreed to do for Zaire last June. So, when Governor Sambwa Pida Nbagui of the Zaire Central Bank sat down with the bankers in London, he called for terms at least as liberal as the governments had given.

But Friedman, for one, was determined to avoid rescheduling. A former high official of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, he used his experience and prestige to shape an agreement which he says can serve as a model for LDC borrowers. "This is our idea of the way to meet debt problems if they arise with other countries," he told *The Wall Street Journal*. "It is a demonstration that any country which has lost its creditworthiness has the ability within itself to restore it."

Zaire's credit rating was near zero when consultations with the banks began last September. Not only had it paid not a penny on almost all its loans for more than a year but its President, Mobutu Sese Seko, had for months "thumbed his nose" at his creditors, refusing even to discuss the problem with them.

The Memorandum of Agreement drawn up by Zaire and the banks involves $375 million in debts from nineteen consortium loans. Thirteen agent banks—six American, two French, one British, one Belgian and one Japanese—representing about 100 bank lenders, agreed to a common formula. In a cover story in March, *Institutional Investor*'s senior editor, Nancy Belliveau investigated the affair and concluded that "Friedman's international status and Citibank's sheer clout were no doubt instrumental in convincing both the Zairians to abandon their demands for a straight fifteen-year rescheduling, and the twelve other banks to go along with Friedman's plan."

The agreement calls for Zaire to repay immediately about $50 million in past due interest and to meet further interest payments as they fall due, both of which have happened. It also committed Zaire to set up an account for repaying about $50 million of principal that is in arrears. Zaire has been slower than expected in making those payments, but is currently making weekly small deposits. Two other parts of the agreement say that Zaire is to work out a national economic plan with the IMF which would qualify the government for second and third *tranche* borrowing there, and that its credit rating must not drop any further.

In return, Governor Sambwa won two significant concessions. Citibank committed itself to try to raise a $250 million medium-term loan for Zaire after the above conditions were satisfied. (Most bankers had favored only safer short-term financing.) And the bankers agreed that the principal payments in the special account would be released to the creditors only after Zaire received written assurance from Citibank that the new loan was available.

Many experts believe that the outcome of the current crisis in Zaire will dash Friedman's hopes to re-establish the country's credit and make syndicating a new loan

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impossible. Citibank Vice President Hamilton Meserve admits that the pressure is on Citibank to make it work, if Zaire does its part. "We decided some time ago that the two critical LDCs are Peru and Zaire, and we have done everything we can to help them," he says.

Meserve accompanied Friedman to Zaire in mid-March, where they examined Mobutu's latest economic blueprint. "We came away with the impression that it is good if severe," he says. No nation has ever used the second and third IMF *tranches*; the preconditions are indeed stringent. One of the first casualties has been Mobutu's own penchant for expensive attention grabbers, like the 1974 Ali-Forman heavyweight championship. But the burden of the reforms falls on Zaire's 26 million people, whose living standard has already dropped 50 percent since 1963, according to a recent study by the International Labor Organization in Geneva.

However, even major economic cutbacks and new loans will not make Zaire solvent, if fighting disrupts copper production. That metal provides 60 to 85 percent (depending upon its price) of Zaire's export earnings each year, and copper production is centered in Shaba, the scene of the present fighting. Cobalt, another important export earner, is also produced in that area.

When copper prices were high between 1972 and 1974, banks and governments were eager to lend to Zaire. But copper prices, which averaged a record $1 per pound in

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1974, plunged to below-normal levels in 1975 and have remained around 60¢ since. The country suffered a gigantic $500 million deficit in 1975, and was forced to adopt major economic reductions last year which brought the deficit to about another $100 million.

The copper price was a major reason why an international consortium last year suspended the Tenke Fungurume copper project—one of Mobutu's dream prestige undertakings and one that would have earned important revenues. When brought into full operation, Tenke Fungurume would become the world's largest copper mine, but after its $660 million price tag climbed past $900 million and Chase Manhattan Bank was unable to market a needed $227 million loan, Tenke Fungurume was placed on a "care and maintenance basis" in January 1976.

In 1970, an American financier, Maurice Tempelsman, had put together a British-American-South African syndicate that bid successfully against Belgian interests for Tenke Fugurume ownership. Tempelsman had been a friend of Mobutu for about a decade—a definite advantage in a country where one man makes all the important decisions. He raised most of the capital from another friend, Harry Oppenheimer, the South African mining magnate whose London investment house, Charter Consolidated, took a 28 percent interest and the lucrative management contract. Standard Oil of Indiana bought a substantial share, Tempelsman's firm took a small slice (about 3 percent), and the rest was acquired by Bureau de Recherches Geologique et Minières (BRGM) and Omnimines of France, and by Mitsui of Japan. The government of Zaire got a 14 percent interest.

To help insure the project's success, Tempelsman hired as his liaison with Mobutu a man who had already established a close relationship with the President. Larry Devlin, former CIA station chief in Kinshasa, joined Leon Tempelsman and Son, headed by Maurice, in 1974 after resigning from the intelligence agency. His first assignment in the Congo (as Zaire was then called) had been from 1960 to 1963, when he was officially a political officer in the American Embassy. After a stint directing Congo affairs at CIA headquarters, he returned to Kinshasa as station chief just five months before Mobutu took power in the November 1965 coup.

Both official and private Americans in Zaire report that Devlin has maintained his close friendship with Mobutu. State Department sources claim he played a crucial though quiet role in "patching things up" in 1975, after Zaire expelled U.S. Ambassador Deane Hinton and charged the CIA with plotting against him. Most Zaire experts say several army generals had indeed tried to overthrow Mobutu two weeks before Hinton's expulsion. But the President deftly used the occasion to shake Kissinger's State Department into giving him the attention he felt he deserved. The Secretary of State dispatched his trusted aide Sheldon Vance, a former American Ambassador, to Zaire, on three trips to Kinshasa in three months. And the secret 40 Committee decided to heed Mobutu's call for increased covert assistance to pro-Western Angolan movements, primarily the FNLA (Angolan National Liberation Front), headed by Mobutu's friend Holden Roberto.

The Ford administration also agreed to ask Congress for $60 million in assistance for Zaire, and since then Congress has approved more than $100 million in economic and military aid. In addition, the Export-Import Bank extended $55 million in new loans and guarantees.

Thus, when Mobutu was confronted by the Shaba uprising, it was only natural that he should appeal to Washington for emergency help. President Carter decided to "maintain support for a traditional ally" on advice from both National Security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Brzezinski's line was that failure to back such an established friend would be regarded in foreign capitals, and particularly in Moscow, as a weakness of will. Vance suggested "demilitarized" aid shipments and discussions with Belgium and France about supplying needed weaponry.

It was a far smaller response than thirteen years ago, when Mobutu sought U.S. help to crush a leftist rebellion. The Johnson administration, including then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus Vance, dispatched American planes and advisers. No administration could do that today without risking public and Congressional criticism.

In spite of strongly worded appeals from Kinshasa, the State Department has resisted sending any military materiel. In fact, U.S. analysts have been skeptical that arms could really assist the Zaire Army. A still-secret Pentagon report concludes that the Zaire military needs "general force modifications and long-range upgrading" before it can absorb the kind of sophisticated weaponry Mobutu has requested. The report was written by a Rockwell Corporation survey team which visited Zaire last May to investigate the army's needs after its poor battle performance during the Angolan conflict.

The team's bleak assessment has been reviewed by both the Defense and State Departments, and an American plan for revamping Zaire's military was submitted to Mobutu several months ago. When the fighting in Shaba began, $38 million in military assistance for Zaire already authorized by Congress remained unspent, although U.S. officials expected to complete the plan with Kinshasa within a few weeks. About $2 million of the unspent funds were applied to the first emergency shipments. An additional $13 million was sent last month. That leaves about $23 million in military sales credits available, and the administration has asked for another $42.5 million in military and economic aid for fiscal 1978.

Sales credits, like bank loans, are supposed to be repaid, but no one today would call Zaire a good credit risk. If one disregards politics, its wealth is abundant. The country produces 67 percent of the world's cobalt, one-tenth of its copper, and is the largest single source for industrial diamonds. Zinc, gold, cadmium, tin, nickel, chrome, manganese and wolframite are also mined in significant quantities. Profitable but untapped reserves of uranium and other minerals could provide future earnings.

But politics cannot be discounted. Like other LDCs, the Zaire economy remains dependent on world mineral markets and international mining companies. The revenues it earns from the vast mineral wealth provide far more benefits for the ruling elite than for the mostly peasant population, which numbers 26 million. Mobutu's life style is lavish, his administration corrupt, his tactics

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ruthless. He depends on strong-arm methods and a disunified opposition to remain in power, and no one can be sure whether he can hold on for a month or a decade.

As long as he remains, he will pose a dilemma for American policy makers. The recent State Department report to Congress on human rights in aid-recipient nations describes, in almost ludicrously dispassionate language, a harsh picture of political conditions: "The use of force and threat of force in the interrogation of suspected criminals is reportedly common practice in Zaire. Generally, however, after interrogation nonpolitical prisoners are not subject to repeated beatings. From time to time, there are allegations of brutal treatment of political prisoners, extended incarceration without trial, and even of death of prisoners under interrogation."

Both the military analysis and the human rights report have apparently convinced American strategists to proceed cautiously during the latest Zaire crisis, but there are as yet no signs that the Carter administration plans to abandon the course set by five previous Presidents, all of whom made Zaire and Mobutu central to their Africa policies. Zaire's position on the map of Africa is strategic—it borders nine other states and straddles the southern, western and eastern regions of the continent.

Uranium mined in the then-Belgium Congo was used to make the first American atomic bombs; Zaire cobalt has long been vital to the U.S. minerals industry, for space exploration and for nuclear plant construction. (No cobalt is mined in the United States and 90 percent of what we use comes from Zaire.) Zaire's copper is essential for the economies of Western European allies.

U.S. companies have invested about $250 million in Zaire. General Motors has an auto assembly plant, Goodyear a tire factory. Gulf Oil's offshore facilities, which began pumping petroleum last year, has an unusual setup —the $27 million in capital for the venture was put up by a European-Canadian-American bank consortium which has assumed all political risks. Gulf has a 50-percent stake and takes the technical risks.

Morrison Knudsen, a Boise, Idaho construction firm which was heavily involved in Southeast Asia, has a $500 million contract to build the Inga Shaba power line. (Work was disrupted in March, however, and most employees were evacuated because of the fighting.) California-based Fluor Corporation has the contract for the suspended Tenke Fungurume complex.

The largest American financial stake in Zaire is that of the U.S. Government itself, which holds at least $500 million of Zaire's debt. The Export-Import Bank has the largest share: $205 million in direct loans and $205 million in loan guarantees. The rest comes from Agriculture and Defense Department credits.

Beyond these economic interests, Zaire has exhibited a certain usefulness as a political "front man" for the United States. When Washington was reluctantly drawn into the "North-South" dialogue on international economic problems in Paris, Secretary Kissinger arranged for Zaire to occupy one of three nonoil-producing LDC seats, where Mobutu's repesentatives have taken a moderate line of key issues. In late 1974, Mobutu agreed to become the active partner of then-President Spínola of Portugal in a drive to install pro-Western regimes in Portugal's soon-to-be-independent African colonies. Most recently, Mobutu intervened at Washington's behest to convince Idi Amin that he should stop harassing American residents in Uganda.

But these short-term benefits for U.S. policy makers will almost certainly appear insignificant in the future if, as many experts predict, the end of Mobutuism is accompanied by chaotic and divisive conflict. Unless Mobutu's opponents demonstrate a unity not hitherto evident, that is a probable outcome to the present crisis, and one that could tempt the American Government toward greater and greater involvement.

In sum, what from the official view are the stakes in Zaire that might prompt further intervention?

¶ "Access on favorable terms to Zaire's mineral resources," in the words of 1975 State Department testimony before Congress.

¶ The creditworthiness of an LDC where both private and government creditors overextended themselves, and the fear that default in Zaire could create a devastating ripple through the entire world financial system.

¶ $250 million in direct investments, which a new regime might wish to nationalize, and more than $1 billion in contracts which might be lost in a changeover.

¶ A staunch American ally, Mobutu Sese Seko, the favorite of five Presidents and one of the CIA's "success stories," since they helped install him and have backed him heavily ever since.

¶ Perhaps the viability of strenuous efforts to engineer moderate settlements in Namibia and Zimbabwe.

And this, one cannot fail to note, is the combination of factors which has led the United States to overt and covert interventions around the world.

The State Department refers to the situation as an "invasion"; both Angola and the Soviets have been blamed. On the other hand, a group called the Congolese National Liberation Front says it is behind the rebellion and pledges an all-out fight to overthrow Mobutu. They say they are neither tribalist nor secessionist but committed to "ending the exploitation of the Congolese people." *The New York Times* (April 13) says that "Exiles from Katanga, as Shaba used to be known, have entered Zaire from Angola to topple the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko."

All the facts are not yet in, but whatever they turn out to be, they could be a major test for the administration, and—especially if it does not divorce itself from old patterns—for the American people. □

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Namibia Spells Uranium

MARTIN BAILEY

At Rossing, in the Namibian desert, the first major uranium mine to be opened in almost twenty years is now coming into production. Financially, the project appears a money spinner. Low operating costs, together with rising uranium prices (now at $40 a pound), may mean that investors will be able to recoup their entire capital outlay within two to three years. But, as a recent stockbrokers report explained, "the main risk for Rossing is political."

Namibia, or South West Africa, is under illegal South African occupation. Once a German colony, it fell to South Africa's control at the end of World War I, when it became a mandated territory of the League of Nations. Finally, in 1966, after South Africa had for years refused to move toward granting Namibia its independence, the U.N. General Assembly withdrew Pretoria's mandate. However, the South Africans did not choose to remove themselves from the territory and—for a variety of reasons, some of which will be obvious from what follows here—no one else chose to remove them.

In Namibia, as in South Africa itself, the black majority suffers from the oppressive apartheid system. The white population of 99,000 has a per capita income of $4,250; the 750,000 Africans receive a meager $250 a head. The South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) has been the main group fighting the South African regime, and has received full recognition from the U.N. as the legitimate spokesman of the African population. Pretoria's intransigence has forced SWAPO to turn to guerrilla warfare; today, some 5,000 freedom fighters confront ten times that many South African troops.

A country twice the size of California, Namibia produces copper, lead, zinc and diamonds—to the advantage of the industrialized countries that have developed these resources, and especially to the advantage of South Africa. Now the Rossing project assumes major political significance against the background of growing conflict. For South Africa, the uranium mine promises to provide enormous financial returns and could well determine Pretoria to harden its control over the territory. SWAPO has condemned the project as "criminal exploitation of irreplaceable natural resources" and the U.N. has threatened to seize Namibian uranium oxide. The Rossing saga symbolizes the struggle between white rule and black power in Namibia.

The South African Official Secrets Act prohibits disclosure of information relating to uranium production, but details from unofficial sources make it possible to piece together the Rossing story. Feasibility surveys indicate that the low-grade deposits in the Namibian desert should yield at least 100,000 tons of uranium oxide over the next twenty-five years. By the late 1970s, when the mine is scheduled to be in full production, more than 120,000 tons a day of ore and waste will be dug from the largest open-cast working in southern Africa. This would yield for export 5,000 tons of uranium oxide a year.

Total investment in the Rossing project already exceeds $200 million. One-third of the costs were financed by equity capital. The major shareholder in Rossing Uranium Limited is the British mining company of Rio Tinto-Zinc (RTZ) which, along with a Canadian subsidiary (Rio Algom), holds 59 percent of the equity stock. The Industrial Development Corporation, a South African Government corporation, provided the bulk of the finance needed for the processing plant and controls 13 percent of the equity. Other participants include Total Compagnie Minière et Nucléaire (the French Government oil corporation) and General Mining and Finance (a South African company). Much of the remaining required capital was lent by a consortium of American banks and a group of West German banking houses.

Rossing is the largest development project in Namibia and the South African administration therefore argues that the mine will give a massive boost to the Namibian economy. From past experience, however, there is little reason to hope that the benefits will filter down to the African population. Indeed, when Rossing's uranium deposits are eventually exhausted, they may leave behind little more than a gaping hole. These fears were clearly expressed by Chief Kapuuo in 1971:

> I am deeply concerned, and so are my people, with the way the natural mineral resources of this country are being removed from it with the full knowledge and permission of the South African government. . . . The Africans who will be brought to these mines under the contract labor system, who will work for periods of twelve to eighteen months deprived of their natural family life, unable by current laws to negotiate their salary, and prevented under strict laws from bettering their conditions, benefit but little. . . . Our fear is that when freedom finally comes to this land, it will be returned to us with no minerals left.

Some employment opportunities have been provided by the new mine, it is true, but the 800 African workers are being exploited. "Despite reports from RTZ's London headquarters that the Rossing mine would be a model in terms of workers' living conditions," the London *Guardian*, recently reported "eyewitness sources here claim that the single living quarters at Rossing were the worst they had seen in Namibia." Last October, only a few months after the mine went into production, a strike broke out over the food provided by the company for its workers.

Rossing displays the apartheid system in microcosm. The complaints of the striking workers soon broadened to include African dissatisfaction over wage differentials. The minimum wage for whites was 556 Rands ($675) a month; nearly three-quarters of the African workers, how-

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ever, were receiving 96 to 136 Rands. Even the upper figure of 136 Rands ($165) was below the Household Subsistence Level, regarded as the minimum needed to sustain a family.

The people receive little benefit from foreign investment. Corporate taxes paid to the South African administration in Windhoek, capital of Namibia, help the apartheid state maintain its oppressive grip over the territory. Almost half of Namibia's gross domestic product is exported in the form of profits to foreign shareholders—mainly in South Africa, the United States and Great Britain. It has been estimated that nearly $60 million was taken out of the country in 1972. If the profits of the three largest mining companies operating in the territory had been distributed equally among all its inhabitants, in that year the per capita income of all races would have risen by 30 percent.

Rossing could also contribute to South Africa's military might by providing access to a major source of uranium. SWAPO has claimed that half the uranium to be enriched at the Pelabinda plant, now under construction, will come from Namibia. This will substantially increase South Africa's ability to produce atomic weapons and Pretoria has never been willing to sign the Nonproliferation Treaty.

The mine will also help South Africa to maintain its hold on Namibia by influencing the policies of a number of foreign governments toward the territory. Several countries are known to have signed contracts for Rossing uranium. The U.K. Atomic Energy Authority (AEA) has agreed to purchase 7,500 tons between 1977 and 1982; Japanese power companies are contracted to buy 8,200 tons; Total, the French Government corporation, has signed up for an unspecified amount; and Urangesellschaft of West Germany, a former prospecting partner which withdrew from the project in 1972 after pressure from the federal government, is reported to have retained an option to purchase 10 percent of the mine's production.

In Britain the Rossing deal has caused a major political storm. The government claims that Namibian uranium is now essential for the country's nuclear power program, and critics of the government have charged that the United Kingdom refused to accept the 1974 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Namibia because it would have entailed cancellation of the Rossing contract.

Since the Namibian deal was signed in 1970, there has been strong pressure within the Labour Party to seek alternative supplies of uranium. Late in 1973 Anthony Wedgwood Benn, former Labour Minister of Technology, said: "We have already decided to terminate the AEA-RTZ contract. That particular case, in which neither AEA nor RTZ was altogether candid with the last Labour government, points to the need for greater vigilance than has been shown in the past. As the Minister responsible at the time, I certainly learned that lesson." A few weeks later the Labour Party Conference reaffirmed that the contract should be cancelled.

But when the Labour Party was returned to power in 1974, the Rossing contract was quietly accepted and little attempt seems to have been made to examine possible alternative sources of supply in Australia and Canada. Many Labour Party members were angered by the government's stand on Namibia and in February 1976 the National Executive Committee issued an important statement calling on the British Government to cancel the Namibian order. The continuation of the contract "insures a British interest in maintaining a stable status quo in the area and means that the British Government could look askance at political or economic struggles which threaten production at the Rossing uranium mine."

British trade union activists are attempting to inform workers in the nuclear power industry of the origin of the fuel they will be handling and its political implications. Discussions are also being held with representatives of British transport unions to consider the possibility of "blacking" uranium cargo from Namibia. Rossing therefore appears an unreliable source of uranium for Great Britain until an acceptable political solution is reached in Namibia.

Yet despite this insecurity and despite the likelihood of a slowdown in Britain's nuclear power program—which means that much of the Rossing fuel will probably have to be stockpiled—the present government has refused to renegotiate the contract. Meanwhile, Britain and France remain the only U.N. members which have refused to accept the ruling of the International Court of Justice terminating South Africa's mandate to administer Namibia and calling on member states to refrain from providing any support to South Africa's illegal occupation.

It is evident that countries where programs for the future relate to the development of Rossing have reason to support the status quo. SWAPO has declared, with some anger:

> The presence of foreign companies like Rio Tinto-Zinc in our country; their collaboration with the occupying South African regime; their easy acceptance of job reservation and the pass laws; their role in financing and sustaining the occupying forces in our country—all these factors place them in the frontline of the battle, on the side of our enemy.

And Peter Katjavivi, SWAPO's Secretary for Information, added more specifically that the movement "wishes to restate that it will judge such companies harshly when Namibia attains its independence." A SWAPO government would almost certainly increase taxation on Rossing Uranium and might well consider steps to nationalize the company.

The United Nations has taken an equally strong stand on Rossing. In 1974 the General Assembly passed a Decree for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia which prohibited the extraction, mining, processing or export of any natural resource from the territory. This decree was apparently a major factor behind the withdrawal of American Metal Climax from mining in Namibia the following year. At the same time, four U.S. oil companies—Getty, Phillips, Continental and Standard—pulled out of prospecting in the territory.

Probably the most important clause in the U.N. decree is a section that permits the U.N. Council for Namibia to claim ownership over any natural resources that have been illegally exported from the territory. Secretary Gen-

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eral Waldheim has given formal notice that the U.N. intends to implement the decree. The U.N. Commissioner for Namibia has also said that he expects an attempt will be made to seize Rossing Uranium during 1977.

The management of Rossing Uranium, made increasingly nervous about the company's prospects in an independent Namibia, now seems to be taking steps to cash in on its prospects as quickly as possible. Last year it was announced that an underground mine is to be opened, alongside the open-cast mine, and that is almost certainly an attempt to reach the richest nuggets first.

South Africa, meanwhile, is on the verge of appointing an interim government for Namibia which will include some African politicians, and has promised full independence by the end of 1978. But SWAPO maintains that Pretoria is attempting to set up a puppet regime in order to maintain its hold on the territory. Merely bringing in a few black faces will not end exploitation. SWAPO, backed by the United Nations, has stated that it will refuse to recognize any "stooge" regime set up by the South African administration.

The Rossing mine is coming into production at the very moment when the political situation in Namibia is reaching the flash point. □

AMERICAN POLITICAL ASYLUM

Not for Victims of Our 'Friends'

CHRISTOPHER HANSON

With ugly accounts of harassment and torture coming out of Uganda, Chile, Iran, south Korea and other non-Communist countries around the world, it is all too apparent that the violation of human rights is not confined to one pole of the political spectrum. Refugees from rightist regimes are a reality that cannot be ignored; yet, to date, the United States has come close to ignoring them.

In his United Nations address, President Carter stated: "No nation can claim that mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business." This sentiment is fully consistent with *stated* American policy on political asylum. From Truman to Ford, the official view has been the same: evenhanded consideration will be given to all who seek asylum from any repressive regime and can demonstrate a "well-founded" fear that political, religious or racial persecution would await them if they were returned to their native country.

Unfortunately, the official view amounts to an official lie. It is far more difficult for refugees from right-wing dictatorships than for applicants from Communist countries to gain asylum in America. However "well-founded" their fear of persecution, many refugees from such governments have become the tragic victims of the double standard applied by U.S. officials who grant or deny appeals for political asylum.

In the past three years, nearly 1,000 Haitians have escaped from their homeland, striking out in small boats for Miami in the hope of asylum. At least fifty have drowned en route. Nearly all those who survive the dangerous voyage are given summary hearings in Florida and declared ineligible for asylum (97 percent have been ordered deported, according to State Department reports). One Haitian, desperate over his plight, hanged himself in the jail cell where he was awaiting deportation. By now, hundreds of others have been sent back to the authoritarian Duvalier regime.

Our treatment of these Haitians is part of an overall pattern of discrimination. Statistics for 1974-75 (acquired under the Freedom of Information Act) show that refugees from other right-wing governments are hardly greeted with open arms. For example, 158 Filipinos, in America on temporary visas, asked for asylum when President Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines and began jailing his political opponents. All but three of those requests were denied. After the bloody coup which overthrew Salvador Allende, 162 Chileans then in the United States asked for asylum from the reign of terror; 95 percent of the Chileans were turned down. In the same period, denials were recommended for thirty-nine of forty-one requests from the Dominican Republic and for all appeals from Greeks and South Vietnamese prior to the fall of the Greek junta and the Thieu regime. All appeals for asylum by south Koreans and Iranians were dismissed, although both countries are notorious for their brutal treatment of dissenters.

Refugees from Communist countries, on the other hand, seem to qualify for asylum almost automatically. The State Department figures show that in the same period nearly 95 percent of the applications for asylum from Russia, Romania, Poland and Czechoslovakia were approved. A State Department official conceded in an interview, "Yes, we have granted asylum or have failed to return people to any Communist regime, excluding Yugoslavia." (Yugoslav citizens enjoy unusual freedom of movement and their government is on good terms with ours.)

Current information on grants of political asylum is hard to come by. The State Department claims that statistics on the matter have not been compiled after Decem-

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ber 1975—possibly to escape unwanted scrutiny under the Freedom of Information Act. However, an official from the department recently confirmed that, despite talk of a "new approach" to human rights, the pattern of asylum grants and denials continues as before. Jack Wasserman, Charles Gordon and other lawyers who represent clients fighting deportation to rightist regimes, say that nothing has changed in the early months of the Carter administration. Wasserman hopes a more uniform respect for human rights "may percolate through the State Department and bring about a change," but as yet, he says, government lawyers are carrying the same old briefs when fighting aslyum claims in court.

Aliens who manage to reach the United States and then formally request asylum represent a very small fraction of the political refugees in the world at large. Within the broader context of those who petition to enter, the pattern of discrimination is even more obvious. Here again, the United States has been generous in offering sanctuary to escapees from communism. The immigration law allows an annual admission quota of up to 17,400 refugees who are fleeing "Communist or Communist-dominated countries or the general area of the Middle East." In addition, special parole programs have been authorized for large numbers of Communist-country refugees under emergency circumstances: more than 38,000 Hungarians after their abortive revolution, more than 400,000 Cubans after the Castro revolution and about 130,000 South Vietnamese after the American withdrawal.

However, for political refugees from non-Communist countries there is no special quota under the immigration law, and, except for about 1,000 Ugandan Asians and 350 Kurds, there have been no significant parole programs.

State Department spokesmen insist that their policy toward political refugees is impartial, but that their hands are tied by the wording of the immigration law. Those sections of the Immigration Act relating to refugees seem, in fact, designed for the sole benefit of those fleeing communism. It is almost as if persecution by right-wing juntas were unknown to the drafters of the law. Until recently, the refugee quota, along with the entire seven-point preference system of immigration, was confined to the Eastern Hemisphere. Its extension to the Western Hemisphere on January 1 has served mainly to formalize the admission of Cuban exiles. "Refugee" is still defined so narrowly as to exclude those fleeing regimes like Argentina, Haiti, Brazil and Chile.

Another section of the immigration law bars the admission of any alien who advocates communism or "the overthrow of the government" or who has voluntarily been a member of any Communist organization, etc. State Department functionaries insist that this provision prevents them from accepting many refugees from right-wing regimes like the Chilean junta, since these are persecuted chiefly because they are Communists or Marxists.

But despite the cold-war discrimination in the law, the administration's hands are *not* tied. The parole provision gives the Attorney General discretionary power to admit aliens who are otherwise excludable. This power could be used, but seldom is, to compensate for bias in the law. By one estimate, only 2 percent of the beneficiaries of parole are fleeing from non-Communist countries.

Our government's response to victims of the Chilean junta is a case in point. After the September 1973 coup, thousands in Chile were summarily imprisoned; many were tortured and executed. In August 1974, General Pinochet, leader of the junta, announced that most of the Chilean detainees would be released if other countries would accept them. A number of Western nations immediately responded with offers of asylum. The United States remained silent for fourteen months, while hundreds of Chilean detainees were being quietly executed—and 130,000 Vietnamese were expeditiously admitted to the country. Finally, in October 1975, the United States agreed to admit no more than 400 Chilean families who would first be carefully screened to keep out security risks. Under the circumstances, this response was shockingly inadequate. Eighteen months after the Pinochet announcement, only twenty-seven Chilean detainees had arrived in America.

Meanwhile, an estimated 21,000 Chileans and foreign nationals had managed to escape from Chile into Peru and Argentina, where many of them were in desperate plight. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees appealed to U.N. members to grant permanent asylum to some of these refugees. France, Sweden, Canada and other nations responded generously; the United States did not take in a single one. The parole authority lay dormant.

Why was our Chilean parole program so belated and so inadequate? Why hasn't the parole authority been broadly used to compensate for legislative discrimination against refugees from right-wing governments? A State Department desk officer answered: "Pal, that's a question with a hell of a lot of implications. I mean it gets into political, economic, and bureaucratic issues that I'm not prepared to talk about." Speaking on the record, department bureaucrats deny that political or economic considerations significantly influence the asylum system. Their official position is: "More Communist-country applicants are admitted because they are almost uniformly more qualified for asylum." When examined closely, however, that assertion is exposed as a mask for political discrimination.

In justifying asylum for fugitives from communism, for instance, officials cite the dictatorial nature of Communist governments and remark that many of the applicants have risked their lives to escape. Yet when Haitian refugees are discussed, the same officials deny the dictatorial nature of the Duvalier regime and ignore the fact that Haitians have risked, and often lost, their lives to reach America.

They also cite "standardized stories" as evidence that Haitians and Filipinos have been coached to qualify for asylum and that their claims are fraudulent. Yet "standardized stories" are so common among successful applicants from Communist countries that one Foreign Service officer suggests they have been coached by experts in immigration law.

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Refugees from rightist regimes are often turned away on the ground that their motives for seeking asylum are largely economic. But when pressed, several of the officials who deal with asylum conceded that a good many Communist-country applicants are so motivated. "Career limitations" is sometimes a sufficient reason for Eastern European admissions. In 1975, Czech tennis star Martina Navratilova said frankly of her decision to seek asylum: "Politics had nothing to do with it. . . . I am doing it to enhance my tennis career." She was admitted without question.

Above all, State Department officials insist that Communist governments persecute everyone who has tried to escape, while other dictatorships do not. Yet some sources acknowledge that aliens who are returned to Communist China and the more "liberal" East European countries are not known to be treated harshly. The *uncertainty* of the fate of those who are returned to mainland China, Poland or Czechoslovakia is the ultimate justification for not returning them. Yet the fate of Haitian or Philippine returnees is also uncertain, and many of them are sent home.

It comes down to this: Haitians, Chileans, Iranians, Filipinos, etc. generally face an almost impossibly stiff burden of proof that they are legitimate political refugees, while the asylum qualifications of those fleeing communism are almost automatically conceded.

The real American attitude toward political asylum is less a cohesive policy than a response to pressures exerted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the State Department and the Congress. Whenever State and Immigration consider admitting a refugee group of any size, Congress insists on being consulted. Congressional views are taken seriously; and on immigration matters they tend to be conservative, reflecting a widespread sentiment for restriction of all immigration and a preoccupation with security risks. For example, Congressional misgivings contributed to the delay in implementing the grudging Chilean program. A Congressional aide conceded that the House and Senate immigration subcommittees are highly susceptible to pressure from restrictionist groups and have consistently opposed the admission of leftist refugees.

Accordingly, East European lobby groups vie with xenophobic organizations to influence Congressional opinion. Communities such as the Russian-Americans, Polish-Americans, Hungarian-Americans, etc. have been established in this country for some time and achieved considerable economic and political power. They can lobby effectively, give legal advice and provide sponsors to guarantee that new arrivals will not become public charges. Their efforts have reduced resistance to admissions from Communist countries. In contrast, refugees from rightist governments are not effectively represented by groups already settled here, and are in no position to exert much influence.

While Congress and lobby groups have their influence, the most direct channel of domestic political pressures into the asylum system is through the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Faced with a desperate illegal alien problem, INS embraces the goals of restrictionist groups with a vengeance. "Quite frankly," said one State Department official, "the people at Immigration do not think in humanitarian terms. Their concern is to keep the number of aliens coming in—both refugees and immigrants—to the absolute minimum." The attitude at Immigration was tersely conveyed by Deputy Director Edward O'Connor: "We can't let America become the dumping ground of the world."

Geopolitical pressures are channeled through the State Department, where the prevailing attitude was summed up by a desk officer: "We can't let political asylum damage our bilateral relationships!" Foreign policy interests are always paramount at State. Those in the department who must process requests may wish to make their considerations apolitical; but they do not operate in a political vacuum, and are subordinate to others with different priorities. One official conceded that the need to maintain strong bilateral relations was the chief reason for denying asylum to Iranians, Filipinos, south Koreans and—before May 1975—South Vietnamese. Granting asylum to refugees from friendly countries, he explained, "can only lead to resentment against the United States and both sides lose out." He shuddered at the possible consequences of granting asylum to Iranians: "The Shah would become very, very angry. At the very least he'd reprimand the Ambassador and the President. The atmosphere would be tense, and this might affect U.S. business prospects, the availability of oil and so on. The Shah could be very, very nasty."

When high officials in the State Department take a personal interest in refugee programs, as they often have over the years, it is with the aim of using those programs as a tool of foreign policy. Cuban and other refugee programs continue to move today along the lines of cold-war foreign policy decisions made in the 1950s and 1960s. The origin of such decisions may be traced in statements like that of John Hayes (State Department Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs) before a 1959 Congressional hearing:

> From a strictly economic point of view, I suppose it might be better if nobody came into this country; but there are other factors which cannot be overlooked and one . . . is the impact on our foreign policy . . . the necessity of this country maintaining a role where we are the leader of the anti-Soviet, anti-Communist camp.

After conducting nearly a hundred interviews, my impression is that bureaucrats are not acutely sensitive to the suffering of exiles. Political refugees are a headache to most of them—a problem to be processed from the "In" box to the "Out" with as little hassle as possible. The expeditious formula is: "Approve virtually all Communist-country applications and deny nearly all others."

If the political asylum system is ever to serve the impartial, humanitarian goals it professes, the following changes are most important:

¶ *The immigration law should be amended to acknowledge that political persecution can occur under any dictatorial form of government.* The definition of refugee

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should be broadened to include all who have a reasonable fear of persecution because of "nationality, membership of a particular social group, race, religion, or political opinion." (In each of the past five Congresses, such a reform has passed the House only to die in Senator Eastland's Judiciary Committee.)

¶ *The law should be revised to allow for the adjustment of refugee-parolee* status to that of permanent resident alien with full right to work. The status of parolees is now indefinite and insecure.

¶ *The exclusion of refugees on the basis of their political beliefs should end.* Aliens who have employed or directed terrorism or violence to further an ideology should be excluded outright, but belief alone should not be grounds for denying asylum. The current "ideological test" should be eliminated. It exposes a lack of faith in constitutional liberties and hinders impartial, humanitarian treatment of refugees.

These legal reforms would clarify the intent of the asylum program; but they would probably not prevent political influences from subverting humanitarian goals. The following steps could minimize those influences:

¶ *One independent agency could be established* to administer the asylum and refugee program, with humanitarianism as its primary motivation. If the head of such a bureau could be made a post of stature, to be filled by Presidential appointment and Congressional confirmation, and if the parole authority could be transferred to the holder of this post, then the new agency might have enough power to counter the political forces which now detract from humanitarian practice.

¶ Above all, *forceful leadership is needed* to bring about significant change. That leadership must come from the President himself. "Hypocrisy," wrote Rochefoucauld, "is homage paid by vice to virtue." One can hope that in his statements on human rights, President Carter is not merely paying homage to virtue. There are encouraging signs that he is not. The President has criticized the ban against Marxists traveling in the United States. He has supported curtailment of military aid to violators of human rights—at least to those of minimal strategic importance—and his administration favors a broadened, nonideological definition of refugee in the Immigration Act. But that is not nearly enough.

President Carter might do well to announce that one way his administration will keep its commitments on human rights is with a just program for political refugees. He cannot promise to take in all the suffering people of the world, but he should promise that all asylum applications will be judged with compassion on their merits, and that each refugee group produced by political crises abroad will be given consideration on the basis of human needs, rather than for the sake of political gain. He should then make sure that this pledge is kept.

Such a Presidential initiative cannot come too soon. Political refugees, after all, are not just statistics in reports. As Edward Ennis of the American Civil Liberties Union wrote, an asylum decision may be "the most important . . . in respect of an alien that can be made in his or her lifetime. Indeed, approval of such an application may involve all that makes life worth living for the applicant." □

TDI: The Unacknowledged Poison

VIC COX

To the general public, isocyanate or TDI poisoning is almost as mysterious an illness as the thus far unexplained "Legionnaire's disease," but that does not mean its cause and prevalence are unknown in public health or industrial quarters. The first reports about it appeared in medical journals twenty-five years ago, but negligence and lack of concern combined to conceal the hazards of exposure to this common ingredient of plastics.

TDI, shorthand for toluene diisocyanate, is for chemical reasons by far the best of the binding agents called isocyanates and, according to a federal study, accounts for 95 percent of the isocyanates consumed by the American plastics industry. Unfortunately, TDI is also the most toxic of these chemicals. "It's really the bad actor of the whole bunch," says industrial hygienist Lee Pitchforth of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Polyurethane is the most common of the plastic compounds that contain TDI. Almost 2 billion tons of polyurethane were manufactured in 1966, the most recent figure available from government and industry sources. This type of plastic can be sprayed, painted, poured, molded, injected, mixed and made into fibers, surface coatings, adhesives and rubbers.

In fact, foam rubber today has been displaced by foamed urethane, which is found in the padded dashboards of cars, airplane seat armrests, and furniture in both home and office. The shoes you wear may have polyurethane soles and heels; the wiring of your household electrical appliances is probably coated with it. Urethane insulates roofs, ceilings, walls, pipes and a variety of containers from refrigerators to storage tanks. Urethane-based paints and varnishes are in increasing demand because of their hard, moisture-resistant surfaces and high gloss.

These and a thousand other products in daily use at home and in the factory contain some quantity of TDI. The question is, how harmful is this chemical to both the worker and the public? Unhappily, as with many chemicals in our environment, there are no clear-cut answers, but the evidence strongly suggests that inadequate protective measures and lack of informed concern are per-

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mitting crippling lung disease among workers and consumers.

According to medical studies of workers exposed to TDI in this country, Canada and Europe, the chemical is most potent and dangerous when inhaled in vapor form. This means that, except for some paints, varnishes and epoxy glues, TDI is chemically stable in most consumer goods. Under normal conditions, that is—a fire drastically changes the situation. TDI is released by no more heat than it takes to boil water. The 1975 edition of *Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials* warns that TDI, "when heated to decomposition, emits highly toxic fumes." It is a problem experts in the plastic industry discuss freely—among themselves.

Chemists Charles Bayha and Laurence Loh of Reichhold Chemicals in New York write in the most recent *Modern Plastics Encyclopedia*: "It is anticipated that the growth potential of rigid foam in the construction area will be the highest among all the applications for urethanes. However, *significant efforts have to be directed toward resolving the problem of fire retardancy and toxic smoke generation.*" (Italics added.)

Cloaked by the phrase "toxic smoke" is the fact that burning polyurethane produces hydrogen cyanide, carbon monoxide and phosgene. All are lethal; phosgene is even a chemical warfare agent. This information is rarely made available even to the people who handle urethane as a part of their jobs. Most of our knowledge of TDI's effect on human beings comes from the last ten years of medical research in the workplace, where exposure hazards are highest and workers frequently play unwitting guinea pigs. Public health "detectives" are still piecing together the extent of TDI's toxicity. They have no consensus on what constitutes safe levels of exposure, if any exist, and industry's experts consistently argue for the highest levels they can get.

The federal regulators at OSHA, who are charged with protecting the health of the worker, have for two years been pussy-footing around with lowering the permitted TDI level from .02 ppm (parts per million) to .005 ppm. That would be the first significant change in TDI standards in nearly fifteen years, and would reflect the data documenting the insidiously destructive nature of the chemical.

What the researchers generally agree upon is that TDI, if inhaled, irritates the nose, throat and lungs; it can burn if splashed on the skin or into the eyes. Most authorities also agree that this clear, slightly yellowish fluid is a sensitizing agent that, depending on the individual and the exposure level, will eventually reduce the victim's respiratory capacity. Although one chemist at the Upjohn Company claims to have handled TDI for sixteen years with no ill effects, his alleged immunity does not seem to be typical.

Since TDI reacts with almost everything, it combines with protein in the lungs' millions of air sacs and disrupts the body's ability to absorb oxygen. This produces asthma-like reactions: dry coughing, chest pains and tightness, discomfort at night. There are cases of TDI victims who accumulate fluids in their lungs, develop narrowed windpipes, emphysema, fibrosis (a scarring of the lungs). Virtually all those affected by TDI have lost vital capacity and, consequently, had their lives shortened. The most severe cases are, in the words of concerned physicians, "pulmonary cripples."

Everett Winfield, a former Lockheed Aircraft wing assembler at Palmdale, Calif. is such an isocyanate victim. At 48 he can no longer walk the length of a city block without having to fight for air. Early last year a judge for the Workmen's Compensation Board awarded Winfield 100 percent permanent disability. He will receive $70 a week until he is 60, when he will be placed on a life pension of $64.61 a week. He is also to have lifetime treatment at Lockheed's expense—or more accurately, at the expense of Lockheed's insurance company.

Winfield, according to Dr. Matthew Margulies of the Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center in Panorama City, has pulmonary fibrosis, which has reduced his vital capacity by half. After some dogged investigation Dr. Margulies identified the culprit in his patient's case: a urethane-based paint that was sprayed in the vicinity of the assembly line where Winfield worked. Nearly every workday for a period of two years Winfield inhaled paint fumes for three to five hours; slowly he was sensitized to the isocyanate. Neither he nor his immediate co-workers were ever provided a face mask or respirator.

The concentration of isocyanate in the air is one factor in determining how soon a person reacts; another factor is the individual's immune response. Winfield had no past history of asthma or allergic reactions; his was almost a classical pattern of increasing sensitivity to the chemical. Every time he got away from the paint, his coughs and chest pains diminished.

One month after he quit work on the advice of Dr. Margulies, Winfield's nose, which had been constantly swollen shut, cleared up. It took another year for his shortness of breath, which was highly erratic, to level off. He has become less dependent on bronchial medication to ease his breathing; he no longer pops Bronkotabs like candy. But that is about as far as Everett Winfield is expected to improve.

Some people suffer strong reactions to TDI within a few hours or days of exposure. One industrial hygienist at the California Department of Health knows of an airline pilot who spent a weekend outdoors helping a friend varnish a vacation cabin. The varnish was urethane-based, the pilot developed asthmatic symptoms and could no longer fly. The "hypersensitive" pilot was not even eligible for the pittance provided by workmen's compensation, since his disability was not contracted on the job.

Providing the victims of TDI with compensation and after-the-fact medical care is simple justice, but it does nothing to solve the problem. "We're just fooling around with compensation proceedings that should never have been necessary," declares Dr. Oscar Balchum, chief of the Pulmonary Disease Service at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. "Is it cheaper to let people die or be crippled than to prevent these health hazards? These are basic questions we're not yet addressing. I can't see letting things happen when we should be preventing them."

Dr. Balchum maintains that many TDI victims could enjoy almost full recovery if their poisoning were caught

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early. Part of the difficulty is that few physicians take an adequate work history of their patients. "You've got to take a complete environmental history," says Dr. Balchum, "and not only at work. For all you know the patient may be using a polyurethane varnish on his surfboard in the garage at home."

He has urged state and federal health officials to lean on manufacturers and suppliers to make them use protective devices, like proper ventilation, and to educate the workers and the public. "Inadequate hazard information on cans of urethane varnishes, for example, is negligence on the part of the manufacturer. It has to be required of them, and of the sellers, that product hazards be clearly labeled. Then the consumer has to be educated to heed the warning."

But knowledge alone may not be enough, if Anastacio Medina's experience is any guide. Medina, an occupational health inspector, has worked for the Los Angeles County Health Department since 1964. In 1969, a few hours after checking out a firm for worker exposure to TDI, Medina had his first attack. It started mildly enough with watery eyes, runny nose and a slight burning sensation in his throat. Before that first sleepless night was over he was having spells of dry coughing with chest pains. "I thought it might be a cold or the flu," he says with an ironic smile.

The next morning he went to a doctor at Kaiser-Permanente's East Los Angeles clinic who thought it was an infection. He prescribed antibiotics. Three visits later the doctor realized that it wasn't an infection and gave Medina adrenalin, which helped. The bronchial dilators subsequently prescribed by a county physician were of more assistance.

It wasn't until much later that specialists told Medina he was suffering from some kind of allergic reaction. With the help of Dr. Balchum, Medina figured out that he had TDI poisoning, a result of inspecting, over a six-year period, some thirty firms that use the chemical in their products. The county suddenly decided that it no longer required the services of an industrial hygienist, with an estimated 37 percent loss of lung capacity.

"I got fired for doing my part to protect the public," he says, still incredulous. "At that point I hadn't even filed for compensation." Pressure from the county employees' association and his lawyer got Medina reinstated in two weeks. With a sad shake of his head the native of Zacatecas, Mexico, says: "That happened here. Can you imagine what it is like in industry? Especially when the victim is some poor Chicano without a green card, or even a good understanding of English."

And why hadn't a health inspector protected his own health from the known toxicity of TDI? "We never wear respirators because we're only there a short time," says Medina, "and 'It' can never happen to us. Besides, if you wore one it might cause panic among the workers who don't have protection." As a whimsical afterthought he grins, "No one wants to be called a sissy."

Anastacio Medina is one of only six county health inspectors—and he can no longer be exposed to TDI. The state Health Department has fifteen to twenty inspectors for all of Southern California. "It's very hard to get trained people," explains Jerome Eisen, a senior industrial hygienist for the state. "We're in the process now of setting up a training program in health hazard identification for the Division of Industrial Safety's engineer-inspectors."

Together the DIS and the Health Department are the operative arms of Cal-OSHA, California's occupational safety and health program. "We evaluate and DIS enforces [state and federal standards]," says Eisen. He admits, however, "We don't know of every place using urethane, nor do we have the budget or manpower to check out all the potential problems."

Hard figures on either the number of California plants using TDI or how many workers are potentially exposed are apparently nonexistent. The 1975-76 edition of *Modern Plastics Encyclopedia* lists no fewer than fifteen suppliers of polyurethane in the state; the Yellow Pages of the Los Angeles telephone directory has about three times that number of firms engaged in polyurethane product manufacturing. But state and local health officials acknowledge that this is just the tip of the iceberg. Even so, California records 350 cases of isocyanate poisoning in the 1970-74 period.

Federal health sources conservatively estimate the total U.S. worker population exposed to TDI at 40,000. However, one of the country's leading TDI investigators, Dr. John Peters of Harvard University, says "probably 50,000, and perhaps 100,000 workers [are] occupationally exposed to isocyanates in the United States."

So how are violations of TDI health standards discovered? "We just stumble onto them," says Alan Tarbell, a DIS safety engineer and acting district supervisor for Los Angeles. "We almost never get a specific complaint about TDI, but when we make factory investigations, especially wall-to-wall, we frequently turn up TDI exposure. Most people don't even know what it is they're handling, and TDI is pretty toxic."

Tarbell thinks that the smaller firms working with TDI are probably the chief offenders because "the large users have well-designed systems." But he can't verify that. DIS says that they keep no figures on TDI violations.

"I've really no idea of how many workers in California are exposed," says J. Robert Signer, DIS assistant chief of Industrial Safety for Southern California. "We do the initial inspection of the workplace, either as a routine inspection or in response to a complaint. Then if we spot something we call in the Health Department and rely on their expertise.

"TDI is a health matter and that's the responsibility of the Health Department," reasons Signer. "It's the employer's responsibility to comply with any safety orders we issue on the basis of the Health Department's evaluation. We hope the public benefits from our control and inspection of the workplace."

With the experts locked in debate over "safe" levels of TDI in the workplace, physicians routinely misdiagnosing TDI poisoning, and the enforcers oblivious to the possible dangers of consumer exposure, Signer's hope appears fragile. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

De Contemptu Mundi

LANCELOT. *By Walker Percy. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 257 pp. $8.95.*

EUGENE CHESNICK

Even before the publication of his first novel, *The Moviegoer,* Walker Percy had already begun his critique of the movies for distorting our hopes. In an essay called "The Man on the Train," published in *Partisan Review* in the 1950s, Percy complains about the sort of movie gimmick which assures us that the pretty girl always turns up in a lonely man's life. "Meeting cute" it is called in Hollywood when she accidentally stumbles over him lying in the grass in Central Park. The poor sap who takes too much of this fantasy unto himself is in a painful predicament. The gap between what the movies have taught him to expect from his life and what can ever happen is cruelly wide. He is going to be waiting a long time in that park, vaguely unhappy and disappointed. No wonder we suffer anxieties we cannot fathom!

Binx Bolling, the narrator of *The Moviegoer,* is a whimsical fellow content to passively survey the goings-on around him. He can playfully address himself to William Holden or Rory Calhoun, relaying to them the situation of the novel, and count on his wit to keep him from making silly identifications with handsome heroes. The protagonist of Percy's latest novel, *Lancelot,* has exploded in fury out of his own passivity and recent personal deterioration. Lancelot Andrews Lamar is a legendary Louisiana football hero who ran as far as a man can against Alabama, the full 110 yards with a kickoff return, and then gradually slipped into lethargy and alcoholism. He is confined in what he takes to be a prison or a hospital or both for burning down his ancestral mansion, Belle Isle, and cutting the throat of the movie producer who was cuckolding him with his would-be actress wife, Margot. He is equally outraged by the discovery that the child of his marriage to Margot cannot be his. Perhaps the depths of the disgust have been there all along, but it is hard to escape the notion that over the years Percy's attitude toward the quality of modern life has hardened some. The furious plot is one indication. He "used to have a taste for the odd and the whimsical," Lancelot says; but the time for whimsy is long gone.

Percy's movie folk in *Lancelot* are the perfect representation of how matters stand now. Janos Jacoby, the director of the movie being shot in the Louisiana parish, displays a fiery French-Polish temperament possibly authentic, but just as likely carefully cultivated in the Bronx. But who knows? Probably not Jacoby. Then there is Raine Robinette, the object of many a moviegoer's lust. Her personal belief is in something called IPD, Ideo-Personal-Dynamics, one more self-realization scheme. Her lover is Troy Dana whose sexual preferences are a little obscure. Together these two teach Lancelot's older daughter, Lucy, some fancy sexual tricks. Troy is beautiful but an "optical illusion." "He was a blank space filled in by somebody else's idea. He was a good actor." So are a lot of people when role replaces soul. Margot, when she first sets eyes on Lancelot, sees him as a Sterling Hayden type. What is behind this habit of ours of seeing a movie star's face in every face we meet? Nothing, as a matter of fact. We have accomplished a technological miracle. We have contrived to photograph an absolute void and what's more find the void quite photogenic.

The plot of the movie involves a Christlike hippie, Dana, who shows up down South to teach love. In the first reel he does manage to pin the woman played by Lancelot's wife up against the library stacks. The producer explains: "He walks into the library and while her mouth falls open, he simply goes to the bookshelf, takes down the *Rig-Veda,* and reads the great passage beginning: 'Desire entered the One in the beginning.' Then, again without saying a word, he takes her hand and leads her back into the stacks, where he takes her standing against the old musty books—Thackeray and Dickens and so forth—representing the drying up of Western juices." The theme of the movie is life as opposed to death, spontaneous love against rape. A corny story, to resurrect an earlier word. Screwing cute instead of meeting cute. Better Doris Day and Pier Angeli. If there is anything more dangerous than silly fantasy replacing reality, it is phony authenticity. Lancelot listens while the others discuss film theory, "Merlin talking about the indispensability of action and story in a film, Jacoby talking in a much fancier way about 'cinematographic language,' 'the semiotics of film,' 'Griffith as a master of denotative language,' 'Metz as the only critic who understands the connotative film,' and so forth." "What junk," he decides.

In the novel of ideas the worth of the idea is a factor in the final assessment of the novel. Percy's mind seems very precise indeed. His intellectual allegiance goes back to earlier sources—Dostoevski, Kierkegaard, Camus. *Lancelot* is a long monologue delivered to an old friend, now a priest-physician, which frequently takes the form of metaphysical questioning reminiscent of *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Stranger*: "But what if you could show me a *sin*? a purely evil deed, an intolerable deed for which there is no explanation? Now there's a mystery. People would sit up and take notice. I would be impressed. You could almost make a believer out of me." What Lancelot argues is a reversal of the old problem of evil: How can there be evil in a world created by an all-good and all-just God? The problem now is that there is no evil but a blandness much harder to combat than an active agent of evil. Find a real devil and you will be able to find a real God. It is an odd search but "peculiar times require peculiar quests."

Percy dissects our feelinglessness. We are merely curious; we find things interesting. "Curiosity and interest and boredom have replaced the so-called emotions we used to read about in novels or see registered on actors' faces," Lancelot says. Boredom at some fine point will translate itself into sheer horror. "What is love?" Lancelot asks repeatedly. "Do you notice that it is impossible to speak of love without sounding like Tin Pan Alley?" he complains. Live with such doubts long enough and soon it will be impossible to tell if your past loves were really so.

Eugene Chesnick teaches literature at Temple University. He is at work on a novel based on the life of Charles Willson Peale, parts of which appeared in Prose *and* Michigan Quarterly.

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Prize-Winning Poets—1977

The winners of "DISCOVERY—*THE NATION*, '77," who will appear at The Poetry Center on Monday, May 2, are Sharon Bryan, James Galvin, Jeffrey Greene and Debora Greger. The contest was judged by Stanley Plumly, Mark Strand and Helen Vendler. In its third year, the competition represents a fusion of The Poetry Center's "Discovery" contest and *The Nation*'s Poetry Prize. It is designed to attract larger audiences for new poets through the combined media of publication and poetry recital.

More than 1,000 manuscripts were received in "DISCOVERY—*THE NATION*, '77," which was open to poets who have not been published in book form. The winners were chosen on the basis of a body of work rather than on individual poems.

For publication in *The Nation*, we chose four from the winning groups of poems.

Grace Schulman, Poetry Editor

THAT FALLING WE FALL

That falling we fall, dying we rise
Are the descant pleasantries of terror.
Circumstance leaves us standing with flowers.

Everything sufficient is invented.
What is said, therefore, must be
Taken to heart and taken back:

Blue whales
Going under, the gesture of their tails
Says amaryllis,
Elegantly and too late; beautiful women,
Ugly women, the grace of God,

Joy, no joy; the dead,
Their arms raised like violin bows
About to begin, begin to sway slowly together.

My mother was friendly, they will like her.
They will comfort her.
They will tell her this
Will never happen again,

This will never happen again.

James Galvin

BLOCK ISLAND

You want to say
every evening is different
therefore beautiful.
Tonight, it is high tide
and the sea is red.
Every year the shore changes.

Here, the army's lead
tore through the dark skin
of forty Mohegans.
These boulders are their graves.
Every night a shadow
falls across them
like a slow wave,
the sun gone behind the island.

Nothing really changes.
Lets say you paddle out
in a canoe.
Each night you come
from a place below sea level.
You still think life comes easy.
Notice how the stars
appear red again.

Jeffrey Greene

CLOSING

I take down the window
and the hill behind it,
the lake just over the hill,
the moon risen over the lake.

And you, prepared for this entrance
since the show opened,
set out across the ice
looking for a wife in the corn fields.

My hair catches in the door as you leave.
Well, cut it off. Quick, more rope.
I push the last elephant
into the truck with a promise:

tomorrow in a pasture anywhere
he'll be painted white,
a target on the heart, fair game.
I start a note,

"Nothing to wear but fear.
I have a dream that I'm flying.
My feathers fall out
into the hands of a stranger. Yours."

Debora Greger

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SLEEPING WITH THE LIGHT ON

I pull the blinds and turn up the lamps.
The walls hold,
but the colors are trumped up and sour,
like lipstick on a corpse.
The only thing I can look at straight on
is a book. I lift it to my face,
a sheet just dry from the line.

*

I read that no one can be excited
about going to sleep, but what
could be more reckless? The hand falls open,
everything gathered falls away.

*

Cities keep going without us,
like a note held by a choir
while everyone takes turns breathing.
I sleep in the dark there.

*

Whatever sound I sat up to
is gone, maybe the door closing
as someone left. A bird flies out
of my mouth saying What did they want?
And, Did you give it to them?

*

Morning. This is the same quilt
I slept under as a child.
No one called me for breakfast
until the coal stove had warmed the kitchen.
Midmorning we let the heat
curl through the rest of the house.

*

Morning. Colors rise to the surface
like souls hurrying back at first light,
no hint of the shapes they put off
for these. All safe. I turn out the lamp.

Sharon Bryan

Lancelot wonders if he was ever in love with his first wife, now dead, or with Margot. As with love, so finally with all emotion: "What do these old words mean? Emotions? Were there ever such things as emotions?" Lancelot wonders.

Intolerable mix-ups of perception and value are so piled one upon another that it is hard to discern what is known for sure. Watching ordinary townspeople falling over themselves in admiration for the celebrities and just dying to be in a picture themselves, Lancelot concludes that "what was nutty was that the movie folk were trafficking in illusions in a real world but the real world thought its reality could only be found in the illusions." The 1960s, that decade so positive it was the turning point, left only uncertainties. Lancelot's uncle fought in the Argonne; his own son was a draft resister. Who was right? The girl in the cell next to him started out at college at Agnes Scott, joined an artists' community in California, became a social worker and was then gang raped. "The standard boring story," is Lancelot's judgment. Part of the problem of going questing these days is that the very act of questing for meaning and significance has become self-consciously repetitive. We may be at such a dead set because we have found out that, after all, there are only so many varieties of experience. As background to all the confusion there is an omnipresent random, pointless violence. Although he refuses to acknowledge it Lancelot is also a part of the madness with his own scheme for destroying the present system to bring about a utopia where men will act with decency and honor in conformity with some stern code of human behavior.

Catholic theology has always been an important part of Percy's fiction; but the contemporary theology, like all else these days, may not be much help to one's fiction or spiritual state. The old way was better in Lancelot's view. "There is only one way and we could have had it if you Catholics hadn't blown it: the old Catholic way," he lectures the priest. Attempts to update religion were misguided. Lancelot's hatred for the modern age tells him so: "I cannot tolerate this age. And I will not. I might have tolerated you and your Catholic Church and even joined it if you had remained true to yourself. Now you're part of the age." Religion for Percy is a counter to superficiality. What one may have to concede, recent attempts at synthesis notwithstanding, is

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that modernity and spiritual depth are strict contradictories. If one is to covet his spiritual life, he has no choice but to hate the modern world.

In an effort to prove once and for all his wife's infidelity, Lancelot arranges his own movies. He has television cameras installed in the motel rooms of his wife and the actress Raine. A new kind of *cinéma vérité*, he thinks of it. He witnesses the producer Merlin and his wife together in one room and Raine and Dana in the other with Lucy. Because of a technical failure, "lights and darks were reversed like a negative, mouths opened on light, eyes were white sockets," an accurate effect for what all this amounts to now. The sound is also blurred so that in a very funny tour de force on the traditional role of dialogue, Lancelot has to piece together as best he can what is said during the lovemaking. "I love you so f(?)—v(?)—much," is all he can hear Merlin say. In such a way are the conventions of pornographic literature disposed of. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* notwithstanding, such scenes perhaps cannot be rendered after all.

What Lancelot craves in knowing for sure about his wife is some clarification of the entire muddle of the times. Southern gentleman that he is he would like to see all women pure. If not, he wants to be able to tell the difference between a good woman and a whore. Thinking back over his relationship with Margot, he decides that "it was good between us." The good is the Hemingway good, however (Hemingway is parodied at great length once in the novel), a satisfactory indulgence but aside from any moral good and settling nothing as far as love is concerned. When Lancelot plays back the tape of Merlin and Margot in bed together, he thinks he overhears Margot say something that is obscene or a prayer. Thinking over this glimpse of intimacy, it seems to him he may have to abandon his demand for categories. "Why does love require absolute polarities of divinity-obscenity? I was right about love: it is absolute and therefore beyond all categories. Who else but God arranged that love should pitch its tent in the place of excrement? Why not then curse and call on God in an act of love?" He has been a long time coming to this understanding.

Just as the movie makers are about to finish their shooting, a hurricane starts heading their way. They have brought with them their own storm device since the script calls for a hurricane. "A propeller on a tower blew rain on the south wing of Belle Isle, whitening the live oaks, and the thunder machine thundered, a huge stretch of sheet metal with a motor and a padded eccentric cam." Of course, the real hurricane is not right for their purposes; reality never is. The coincidence of the two hurricanes arouses one of Percy's favorite themes: the approach of imminent catastrophe. Everyone is happy to see it coming. "Storekeepers seriously-happy boarded up their windows. Volunteers seriously-happy sandbagged the levee." Among people so bored with themselves they can hardly stand it, anything is better than facing up to an ordinary day. Worse still is any recognition that some other disaster has already befallen us in a subtle way we do not apprehend, leaving us lost and estranged, an "event we don't even have a name for it. Sin isn't the word."

Lancelot finds that the murder of his wife's lover and the burning of his home did not make for the revelation he had hoped for. "The question is: Why did I discover nothing at the heart evil?" He must entertain the proposition that "there was no 'secret' at all, no discovery, no flickering of interest, nothing at all, not even evil." There are no answers to absolute questions because there are no questions actually. Lancelot dichotomizes. Either there is a God or there is not. If there is, He will certainly destroy this Sodom. If He does not, Lancelot will take the destruction into his own hands. He will give the perhaps existent God a little more time to act. But Lancelot's is not the final say. The priest-friend who has been listening silently the entire time speaks at long last. "It will be your way or it will be my way," Lancelot tells him. "*Yes*," comes back the answer. The last word of the book is another *Yes* from the priest in replying to a question from Lancelot. Percy, as in every novel he has written, *The Moviegoer, The Last Gentlemen, Love in the Ruins,* here again, very late in the game, as indicative of God's ways, introduces the idea of grace redeeming the whole mess.

We seem to have run through a lot of ideas recently, using up possible philosophical attitudes with great rapidity. Percy is extraordinarily skillful at seeing what is left. Once more, his actors are exact examples of the nature of the predicament. Lancelot observes, "The actors, I noticed, took a passing interest in everything, current events, scientology, politics. They were hardly here at all, in Louisiana that is, but were blown this way and that, like puffballs, in and out of their roles, 'into' Christian Science, back out again." The outcome of such quick turnover in formulas has been lives lived by formula, theories of living, abstract lives rather than actual ones, so that the person is never really anywhere. A novelist, for whom fiction is nothing if not of a time and a place, a Louisiana novelist like Percy especially, with some regionalism still left in him, is in a good position to detect such disincarnated existences. □

Pouring Oil on Troubled Waters

THE BROTHERHOOD OF OIL: Energy Policy and the Public Interest. *By Robert Engler. University of Chicago Press. 322 pp. $12.50.*

HENRY S. KARIEL

A case study, the author calls it in his preface, a case in point. It is no less, but also presumes to be no more. Robert Engler's study of the American-based oil empire is the result of a formidable industriousness sustained by a prodigious faith. Mocked by the massiveness of the very evidence he offers, he holds that an industrial conglomerate governed by nothing but its own mindless momentum can yet be directed to promote the public interest. Though he knows it is late in the day, he has hope. A scholarly presentation of the record combined with sensible recommendations still seems to promise that justice will somehow be done. As Engler reassuringly puts it, the facts themselves insist on change: "the cumulative record of the politics of oil cries out" for new beginnings.

To be sure, Engler steps in to push the facts along and help them cry out. Though he remains almost out of sight, he does give shape to events and decisions as he smoothly moves from detail to detail so as to show how a corporate brotherhood, in easy collaboration with public agencies, fixes the boundaries of policy alternatives over an area which is virtually global. This brotherhood determines energy needs, controls production and markets, negotiates with governments of producing areas, and handles worldwide distribution. It

Henry Kariel's most recent book is Beyond Liberalism, Where Relations Grow *(Chandler & Sharp).*

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guards its interests—profits and self-perpetuation—through patents, bank connections, interlocking directorships, price fixing, bribery and public relations. It involves itself, as Engler has summarized it, in Scottish nationalism, French-Canadian separatism, Latin American development, Puerto Rican independence, Cuban isolation, Samoan sovereignty, Nigerian and Indonesian civil strife, Israeli boundaries, Indian balance of payments, Soviet-American détente, Japanese-Soviet economic pacts, and Chinese-American rapprochement. It reaches out to incorporate organizations such as the CNA Financial Corp., retail merchandisers such as Montgomery Ward, packing manufacturers such as the Container Corporation, and intriguing enterprises such as Ringling Brothers. It subsidizes scientific research, middle-class culture and projects to protect the American eagle. In all this the brotherhood of oil is supported by public officials whose solicitude is reinforced by its "contributions"—cash for politicians, jobs for former civil servants (a House committee reported that since 1960 "the total of Gulf's political giving, legal and illegal, domestic and international, exceeded $12 million"). Its allies permeate governments at home and abroad. It can depend on a U.S. State Department which keeps the way clear for its investments while protecting it from antitrust action and a U.S. Interior Department whose personnel applauds its objectives and whose fragmented organization assures the security of its profits.

This summary conceals how doggedly Engler prompts the record to tell its story, how relentlessly he pushes facts to follow facts so that he finally seems but to hold a mirror up to an economic universe of venality, mendacity, greed, larceny and deception. He would seem to make no judgments as he reveals that nature is plundered, that the integrity of bureaucrats in and out of the oil industry is destroyed, and that people affected by a sprawling but invisible policy-making apparatus are demeaned, exploited and wasted. He makes no show of the implicit but overarching judgment that an old balance between the private and the public sector is being *systematically* subverted by the very economic growth and technological development to which liberalism gave a patent some 200 years ago. Nor does he conclude, as Paul N. Goldstene recently has in *The Collapse of Liberal Empire*, that when public government disdains to use its powers, it becomes "absorbed by a generic corporatism it cannot cope with, the conceptions and language of its ideology skillfully integrated into a propaganda that assures the exploited that they really rule or, preferably, that no one does."

Engler surely is disturbed by all of this but has found no form for sharing his pain and indignation. The wonder—the miracle begging for explanation—is that despite his rage he can manage to keep his story moving. How, given the exhibited facts, can he contain himself? What enables him (and us) to remain so decently composed in the face of the record?

He manages, for one thing, by imposing a measure of dramatic form on the welter of events. In the beginning, so we are told, there was universal acquiescence in the march of petroleum technology under corporate auspices. But by 1974, events produced a crisis. The American people were awakened not by scholars and journalists but by lack of heating fuel, lines at service stations, layoffs in automobile factories, cutbacks in airline schedules, and general increases in prices. As in all dramatically arranged tales, the response to what is experienced as a crisis reveals the character of the actors—industrial managers, civil servants, businessmen, legislators, geologists, generals, journalists and, in the background, consumers. The story—the *form* of the story—is designed to hold our interest so that in the end we will be ready for catharsis, ready to relax with Engler's proposals for legislation which will "restore from exile the ideal of the public interest and governance based upon the consent of the governed." If we are not exactly swept along by this form of Engler's yarn—it is unavoidably filled with repetitive material—we still read on until at last we learn what policies will surely restore the balance of interests and allow us all to become composed once more.

Engler's trip (and ours) is further facilitated by his capacity for expressing surprise as he confronts rather unsurprising data—as when he notes for example that corporate managers have appreciable incomes. If his is not the disruptive irony of Bertolt Brecht (he allows himself to quote Brecht's advice to an unpopular government to dissolve the people and elect another), it does enable him to observe drily that the assaults on the patriotism of oil, gas and utility corporations are "irreverent." He knows, moreover, which of his voices we hear when he writes that the prospects for oil profits are "heartening" or that free enterprise is "perilous." He knows how to use a quote—such as John Connally's announcement after his acquittal of the charge that he had obstructed justice: "I've seen the system work, and it has made me more deeply committed to preserving the system." But beyond exploiting the conventions of drama and irony, Engler draws on the liberal formula for keeping us absorbed.

Prophets and Conspirators in Prerevolutionary Russia

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By implicitly relying on the great abstractions of the liberal enlightenment—self-interested participation, private rights, judicial review, due process of law—he manages to give shape and direction to his account. Being enlisted, he enlists us.

For Engler (and for us), the old forms—a dramatic story line, irony to engage readers, and liberalism as formal creed—remain serviceable and comforting. These forms still provide hope this side of hopelessness: they encourage Engler (and all of us who lack the nerve to move through despair) to appeal to a handful of liberal Senators and an allegedly burgeoning grass-roots Populism. Somehow, legislation will emerge to redefine the legal claim to citizenship of the modern corporation, to deprive it of tax privileges, to open it to public scrutiny, and to subordinate it to revitalized regulatory agencies. Somehow its economic hold will be broken through antitrust action, effective campaign finance regulation, and long-range plans which underwrite "human solidarity" and show "respect for the environment."

To fall back on the available literary and political forms, to use them as if they were neither exhausted nor lethal, to elaborate and *embody* no other conception of the public interest, is to help us acquiesce in a system which, as is becoming easy to note, has given rise to the very practices we lament when relaxing after dinner. The forms at hand serve to reconcile us. They enable us to assent not to our fate, not to what some irresistible nature demands of us but to the perversions, blockages and cancers which those in power proclaim to be synonymous with justice, peace and welfare. They reconcile us to the waste of our resources and our lives. Robert Engler's enterprise, it turns out, is an exemplary case in point. The form and style of his work, not its substance, are unintended contributions to this reconciliation.

Not that I believe there is anything *wrong* with the specific policy recommendations which grow out of the substance of Engler's analysis. It's just that they, like all our half-desperate efforts to improve ourselves, confirm the very way of thinking and acting which bedevils us. We are moved to act not because we value the ongoing processes of life but because we value achievements, conclusions, results, products, solutions, answers. Ours is a culture that makes us hanker to get somewhere and do it right. It rests on an ideology—we may as well call it liberal—that rewards relentless straining to achieve predefined objectives. We keep summoning ourselves to make utilitarian calculations so that we might ultimately enter a decent, easy, open society. We urge one another to *will* what is not attainable by acts of will: a vigorous but nonrepressive public life.

Unless we displace the ideology which validates our obsession with targets and goals and objectives we will continue to demean, cripple, and finally destroy ourselves. My noting this is not so much a criticism of Engler's all-too-honorable idealism but of *everyone's* programs for regaining control over repressive technologies and bureaucracies. Of course it is clear to me that my words are bound to misfire as long as they too are aimed to reach some target—namely a public seeking books to straighten things out. After all, my prose too is aiming to correct a posture by calling attention to an alternative ideal—a community whose members live and struggle without ulterior motives and utilitarian calculations, without ceaselessly striving to come out right.

To be sure, I could alter my style and offer looser prose. I could display myself as less purposeful, as more ironic and open-ended, as essentially playful. Seriously concerned with writing playfully, I could be indifferent to the charge of being frivolous while corporate conglomerates keep exploiting us, while men and women are being systematically starved and wasted. Yet if I managed to express my criticism in this way—seemingly irresponsible and irrelevant—with whom would I be communicating? In a goal-oriented, ideal-focused culture, who would care to publish and hear me? As every prudent publisher knows, irony directed toward politics, toward the issues at the center of our public life, is merely likely to make readers shrug and turn to more useful work. We're either too desperate or not yet desperate enough to accept performances which, being open-ended, are their own excuse for being.

I have tried to say something like this in *Beyond Liberalism, Where Relations Grow*, a book that has just been published. It turned out to be a volume not suitable for a review in *The Nation* for the wholly understandable reason that it is "too theoretical." Yet had it been more pungent and down to earth, closer to the bone and our feelings, there would have been an equally understandable reason for not discussing it: it would be regarded as making light of a heavy subject, of doing nothing more weighty than letting its very style reveal how nothing is finally important, how it's all right to surrender one's determination to win not only in sex or mountain climbing or tennis but also in politics. It would be treated as inappropriate pop psychology or as a politically irrelevant work such as Timothy Gallwey's *Inner Game of Tennis*. Its author would be reproached for fiddling while Rome burns, for being engaged in a performance not suitably reviewed in serious journals like *The Nation*.

There is Important Work to be done, it would be pointed out. There are Significant Books to be reviewed, Pressing Problems to be solved, Worthy Ideals to be pursued. Well, yes, I might respond. But really, no. Our games will not improve until we step out of the dominant political culture, stop being so hard on ourselves and one another, and inquire only how seductively and resonantly we fiddle while the city is in flames. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

"None of us can help the things life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be . . . ." Mary Tyrone says this in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. It is the feeling which sets the tone and creates the pervasive atmosphere of O'Neill's writing. It defines the fate which weighs down and imprisons most of his characters.

In *Anna Christie*, O'Neill associates this fate with the sea. The play's last lines, spoken by Anna's father, Chris Christopherson, a Swedish-born captain of a barge anchored in a New England harbor, are "Fog, fog, fog. All bloody time. You can't see where you vas going, no. Only dat old davil sea—she knows." It is the impenetrable mystery, the essential tragic force which Chris (through O'Neill) perceives in all occasions. In the evocation of the mood which results from that soul-burdening perception we recognize the O'Neill signature.

In his best plays the dramatic material suits his "music." In *Anna Christie* (Imperial Theatre) the plot is banal, as in fact are most of the characters: Anna, the blameless sinner; the Irish steamship stoker, muscular, loose-living, bragging, guileless, decent, superstitiously Catholic, and the confused, hard-drinking, regretful father. In 1921-22 those who found fault with the play, that

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season's Pulitzer Prize winner, did so only on the ground of its "happy ending." Others, "the discriminating playgoers," to quote a prominent reviewer of the time, "who had learned what to expect of O'Neill were enthusiastic in their endorsement. It is a rough play. . . . Much of its dialogue may prove offensive to super-fine sensibilities. [The characters] do not speak the language of the drawing room. But it is also one of the big dramas of the day, soundly human . . ."; etc., etc.

It requires no particular acumen at present to dismiss the play as corny, but it is important to understand that in 1921 it proved effective because crucial to it is the O'Neill spirit, that low-keyed but inescapable inner intensity which lends even his weakest plays an impressiveness that very nearly overrides many of our objections. In 1921 that spirit was embodied in the person of Pauline Lord, one of the most moving American actresses of the past fifty years or more. From Pauline Lord, who was by no means a pretty woman, there emanated a sense of a hurt and sorrowful consciousness, the counterpart of the persistent fatality that hangs over O'Neill's plays. She was not dramatically "exciting": hers was a seemingly mute presence, ineffably touching because it contained all the unshed tears in the common heartbreak of existence.

Liv Ullmann, who now plays Anna, is beautiful and remarkably resembles O'Neill's description of the character: "She is a tall, blonde, fully developed girl, handsome after a large, Viking-daughter fashion. . . ." There is a muffled pain and yearning in Ullmann's voice, a kind of northland bewilderment in her blue eyes, as though her gaze had been forever fixed on a far-off but not quite discernible horizon. She also acts the part, line by line, scene by scene, quite well. Yet she does not express the quintessential Anna. As she enters the stage, she indicates the ill health Anna has suffered, but it is only a temporary indisposition. Anna's sickness is the ache of a soul, an unromantic existential pain which is exemplary and not only due to the accident of present circumstances. Ullmann, whatever her immediate ailment and trouble, strikes one as healthy at the core. O'Neill's Anna is something more than a figure in a particular, lamentable and not very original story. Only with an Anna such as I have suggested through the image of Pauline Lord can the play today truly affect us.

The rest of the cast, like Ullmann, may be set down as "good." John Lithgow is certainly engaging as the boastful Irish swain, but somewhat callow in the torment of his discovery that Anna has been a prostitute. Robert Donley is descriptively right as Anna's father, but he is impeded by the nature of the production as a whole. It is faithful to the action and the events of the play; it does not evoke the underlying sources from which the play must draw its power, and without which all O'Neill's work may appear shoddy. José Quintero's intelligent direction is in line with the play's overt course; it is external, which makes it vehement, professionally sound and, at bottom, ordinary. Good settings (especially that of the barge) by Ben Edwards and other assets do not overcome the basic deficiency. The production does not speak with the inner voice which alone could save it.

Were I to recite in full detail all the elements which compose *White Marriage* I would still not convey its extraordinary quality (Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven). Its author, Tadeusz Rozewicz, born in 1921, is today one of the leading Polish playwrights. The play has been directed by Andrzej Wajda, best known in this country for his film *Ashes and Diamonds*. (He also heads what many consider the best theatre in Poland, situated in Kraków.) His wife, Krystyna Zachwatowicz, has designed the scenery for the Yale production, as she does for most of her husband's many films and plays.

When *White Marriage*, which Wajda calls a "fairy tale for adults," was first mentioned to me it was described as a highly erotic piece. Eroticism is virtually taboo on the Soviet stage and, though Poland is free of many Soviet artistic inhibitions, *White Marriage* when it was produced three years ago in Poland aroused controversy there on that account. But though it is true that the erotic sensibility is part of the play's texture and theme, *White Marriage* encompasses a wider range of feeling and answers a broader purpose. It is at once satire, fantasy, poem.

The play, in thirteen "tableaux," pivots on two young girls who are approaching their "spring awakening," a sensual awareness of their femininity. The younger one is unrepressed, charmingly forward; the second, extremely shy, is already nubile and is in fact being prepared for marriage to a youth who, though a student at Heidelberg, is still a virgin. But all three are in almost every respect innocents. The action takes place at a country estate in the early years of the century.

What is pictured is bourgeois society (with peasantlike underpinnings), especially in regard to sexual relationships. The young are kept uninformed of such matters; most of the married women have been subjected to unions with men who treat them as properties. The men chase their female servants—cooks, maids and other such—like brutes. They reduce these women to wildfowl and they display little warmth to or understanding of their daughters. Thus, on the one hand we observe the silly decorum of pseudo-cultivated society (piano playing, amateur theatricals, poetry recitals); on the other, the manners and morals of the barnyard.

One might suppose, then, that all this would be transformed into a sort of women's lib parable, an earnestly fanciful denunciation of the old-time Polish bourgeoisie. Instead, along with hilariously phallic humor, deft stabs of ridicule, the play is suffused by a very special delicacy and tenderness, a kind of comic benevolence, a purity which dissolves derision and dispels any suspicion of preachment. There is an insinuating mockery here but it always remains joyous, sane and surprisingly touching. At certain moments a somber note is struck to provide a framework for and a contrast to the general airiness. The loveliness of both adolescent girls bathes the crudities inherent in some of the proceedings with a light which turns all to serene beauty.

As director, Wajda has captured the intent and spirit of the play to perfection. The production, in setting, movement, characterization, is an unostentatious gem. Everyone is in tune. Carol Williard has the vulnerable fragility and the sweet bewilderment of Bianca, the

TWO

My dreams come to me in pairs.
I expect it,
like two cakes arriving for a birthday,
only it's no one's birthday.
Or a coyote shot in front of its mate,
for no reason
and the bitch gets into the house,
time and again to steal what shines
and leave it in a treeless place.

Another day, a widow's life yawns
as she looks across the courtyard
to a gate sealed shut by trees
grown up on either side.
In the same town, a man about
to take a bath in a strange house,
finds an earring, in the shape of a bird,
thinks of the breasts
of the girl he will meet.

Dana Naone

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girl bride; Blanche Baker, as her younger companion, is luminous with the wily candor, the seething energy of a child on the verge of becoming a glorious woman. Alvin Epstein is very funny as the toothless satyr of a grandfather, the apt progenitor of his untamed bear of a son played by Eugene Troobnick. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

The first two or three times a fellow named Alvy Singer was mentioned in Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* I blinked, wondering who the devil he was. It took me a while to catch on that he was the character Allen was playing, since it seemed so obvious that Allen was playing himself. To be sure, he describes the film, which he also directed and wrote (with Marshall Brickman), as a "romantic comedy about a contemporary neurotic," so we mustn't assume it to be autobiographical. But that's an assumption hard to sustain: the picture opens with a rather extended monologue in which it seems that Allen (we haven't yet heard of Singer) gives us a quick rundown on his life to date and some reassuring words about his present health. Then from time to time, he addresses us directly on developments in the story, is seen briefly in the tape of a Dick Cavett show and in general frequents the places and pals around with the people where and with whom one might expect to find Woody Allen. And is it so improbable that he sees himself as a contemporary urban neurotic? Pages from the life of Woody Allen, as "adapted by" Allen and Brickman; that might come close.

Annie Hall is a movie about "relationships"—with women, that is. Singer, as I shall call him, is a man of ingratiating vulnerability who finds them only too easy to form, but impossible to maintain. And though he ruminates a good deal about why this should be so, both to us and to his psychiatrist, it never dawns on him that the ease on the one hand may relate to the impossibility on the other. Allen, who otherwise resembles him only in stature, is like Chaplin in that what he shows you about the quality of contemporary life is marvelous, but his attempts to tell you what it all means is a bit dumb. You want to watch what he does and not listen too carefully to what he tells you. *Annie Hall* is made delicious by a succession of incidents whose wit derives from their precise but slightly heightened evocation of experiences we have all had ("we" in this case being especially those familiar with the upper middle class, Upper East Side sixties of Manhattan).

Singer displays Jewish paranoia, grins at *New York Review* sophistication, has achieved the high-status goal of playing off-season tennis in a plastic bubble (he doesn't shop at Zabar's, which surprises me). Standing in a Third Avenue movie queue, Alvy is driven mad by a loudmouth behind him who pontificates second-hand ideas on the aesthetics of film. Allen spoils that jest, though, by producing Marshall McLuhan himself from behind a lobby billboard to prick the bore's balloon. The gag is too studied; it pricks the excellence of the observation. Other japes occasionally fail—there is a joke about Kissinger and Harvard that hasn't been viable for at least five years—and invariably they are examples of Allen plotting to be clever instead of trusting his instincts to get him where he wants to go. He also uses camera technique—split images, subtitles—to reveal what's on the characters' minds when they are saying or doing something else. That's a bit heavy-handed for knockabout comedy (more Eugene O'Neill's sort of thing), and is anyhow unnecessary for an actor/director who knows well enough how to make clear what he and his fellow players are thinking without hanging up signs. (Note his face when a young woman asks him if a crazy remark he's just made is supposed to be funny.) Then, at the end, Allen appears again in monologue to tell the (deliberately) old yarn about the man who complains that his brother thinks himself a chicken. When asked why he doesn't have the unhappy lunatic put away, he says he would, "except that I need the eggs." It's that way about relationships, says Allen in conclusion; "we keep on having them because we need the eggs." When you've finished laughing, ask yourself what that's supposed to mean.

Yet *Annie Hall*, for all its vagaries, is a funny, often touching, sometimes astute picture. It is about the desperate race to stay ahead of anonymity. Singer and his relationships jump into bed as readily as they jump into taxis, and then find that in fact they want to go different ways. Annie, the girl of the title (Diane Keaton), comes closest to traveling along with him. Recently in town from the Middle West, she has that affliction of the painfully shy of carrying on hysterical dialogues with herself in a hopeless attempt to correct any unfortunate remark she may have made to the person facing her. The effect is to make shyness epidemic. But Alvy himself is not without tics; they are symptoms of his steel-tempered and ever available inferiority complex. (Fifteen years in analysis, he is quick to tell anyone who looks to be getting the upper hand.) When Annie sees how that works, she speaks straight enough and Alvy is on his own again. I don't buy talk about egg-laying relationships, but I understand what Allen shows me about an ego looking for a place to put its little head. It gives substance to a film that is otherwise a shrewd put-down of success, Fun City style. There was a time when I thought Woody Allen was caught in the trap, as I saw it, of being the smartest, runtiest aleck in the neighborhood. But after *The Front*, and after *Annie Hall*, I suspect he's on to more important things. He's now 40, he tells us; he has time, he has quick eyes and ears and a sardonic turn of mind. And Lord knows he has energy. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

The second generation of nonexpressionist abstract painters has been seen in a steady stream of retrospectives in the last ten years. The first was Paul Feeley (Guggenheim Museum) in 1968 but the show was too early and the artist did not enjoy the support of Clement Greenberg—a crucial factor, as we shall see. Then came Helen Frankenthaler in 1969 (Whitney Museum), Frank Stella (Museum of Modern Art) in 1970, Jules Olitski (Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Whitney) and Ellsworth Kelly (the Modern) in 1973. Now it is the turn of Kenneth Noland, whose work from 1956 to 1976 is on view at the Guggenheim until June 19. On the whole, except for the Olitski show which aroused no public interest at all, the shows have consolidated the reputations of the artists as part of an American Establishment. All of them are attached to a theory of "modernism" which should be inspected before we turn to Noland's art.

Modernism is a sneaky term. It has associations with modernity as the spirit sought for and defined by Baudelaire. It connotes originality and experiment, independence and risk. But the new term, modernism, actually means the reverse: it is a label for artists who conform to a narrow technical canon of painting.

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This sense of the word rests on an assumption of the absolute separation of the arts, each with a proper domain of operations that permits no trespassing. In proper domain theory, painting is characterized purely by color—color separated from line (which belongs to drawing) and modeling (which belongs to sculpture, since it implies three-dimensional mass). Only abstract stain painting, in which color is soaked into the canvas, is to be called "modernist." This marriage of Lessing's medium purity with 19th-century aestheticism is the achievement of Clement Greenberg. As a result of his authority, modernism is associated with a single option among all the ways of painting available in the last twenty-five years: Morris Louis, Frankenthaler, Olitski and Noland especially embody the style.

The duplicity of the word consists in the fact that it refers to a handful of conservative abstract artists who are falsely garlanded with the vivacious and optimistic overtones of modernity as an aspiration. It makes possible writing like this, by Kenworth Moffet: "Olitski is, at least for the moment, saving the easel painting itself as a viable modernist idiom." It sounds at first as if Olitski had his finger in the dike for all of us, and hence has about it a promotional grandeur; but the sentence is real only if you accept flat color as the sole legitimate way to paint in the 20th century.

Noland's paintings at the Guggenheim look fine: big and bright, clear and neat, fresh and uncluttered, their sequential flow fully legible. Indeed, a curious aspect of the exhibition is that the continuities between paintings are often more interesting than any of the paintings viewed singly. He has had a prudent development, in which large geometric motifs have emerged, one at a time, each starred in a series of works, gradually modified and then replaced. Shifts occur about every two years, so that formal changes coincide with the exhibition schedule of a busy artist. The course of Noland's development is drawn, like a colored graph, round the walls of the museum.

The paintings are best when simplest. The earlier circles, full of flickering and fluttering touches, seem weaker than the later neat circles. And in the plaid paintings there is a disparity between the large size of the canvas and the finicky color variations. His animation of the picture by manual touches is odd: the canvas is goosed, but not stirred. It is the schemata that are real to Noland, not their variation. For this reason the symmetrical chevrons and the elongated diamonds, with their uninflected bands of color, look best to my eye.

What does Noland's art mean? This is the question at which discussion always hesitates. Michael Fried considered that the chronology itself, as a course in problem solving, was exemplary of human thought, but to me the sequence of Noland's decisions looks routine, not exhilarating. Alan Solomon stated that "Noland's paintings are about color," but what does that mean in the absence of an agreed-upon system of color coding, such as was culturally available in Kandinsky's time, but not later? Noland's work rotates around formal matters, such as the connection of canvas center to canvas edge, the relation of symmetrical image to containing field, or the contrast of lines parallel to the long edge of a canvas and their impact on the short ends. The play of these devices does not deserve the term *problem*: they are arbitrary and can be resolved in any way the artist wishes. This kind of formality is like detective stories in which, whatever the appearance of logic may be, anybody can be the villain until the last page.

The first dated painting in the present show is from 1956, but the illustrations to the catalogue start much earlier. Diane Waldman, curator for the show, gives an exceptional degree of attention to Noland's European sources, particularly Paul Klee in the early 1950s. Klee, known to so many American artists and acknowledged so sparingly, is shown as a prime source. Waldman speaks forthrightly for Noland's knowledge of other European artists, such as Albers, Kandinsky and Mondrian. It is worth pointing out that by doing so she is resisting one of Greenberg's edicts concerning American abstract artists. He asserted that they "have not inherited it [the hard edge] from Mondrian, the Bauhaus, Suprematism, or anything that came before." Art historians have been much attracted by Greenberg's theories, but their conscience has not forced them to tackle his chauvinistic view of his artists' origins. I admire Diane Waldman's confrontation of the problem. It is a strong contribution to our knowledge of postwar American art, of which Noland is, in many ways, a representative figure. □

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INDIGENOUS MUSIC/Nat Hentoff

Fifty years ago, if there had been a contest for the nation's most enthusiastic jazz buff, Bing Crosby would have been a leading contender. Back home in Spokane, he had memorized the recordings of the Mound City Blues Blowers, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and the Memphis Five. And when he dropped out of law school to hit the road as an entertainer, personal glory was much less on Bing's mind than an overwhelming desire, as he told me recently, to follow "those sounds, those wonderful sounds. I was determined to work my way into the company of jazz musicians."

Having realized that ambition by becoming part of the Paul Whiteman cortege, Bing pursued and absorbed all the jazz sounds he could find. With his roommate, Bix Beiderbecke, Crosby was a perennially beguiled attendant at afterhours jam sessions in every city the Whiteman band played. In particular, he learned much of the subtleties of jazz phrasing from guitarist Eddie Lang, violinist Joe Venuti and trumpeter Bunny Berigan, among other post-midnight companions.

While Crosby—once he himself became a figure of enormous impact in popular music—was seldom categorized as a jazz singer, there have always been unmistakable jazz elements in his style. For one thing, he is a chronic improviser, spinning variations on the melody without, however, distorting it. And Bing invariably swings. That is, his beat is unusually resilient for a pop vocalist (including most of the young rock singers). With the assurance of a jazz horn player, moreover, he plays with the beat, thereby transcending even the most massively commercial arrangements. On the other hand, many of his most satisfying recordings have been with small combos of jazz players, for jazz is indeed the setting he most enjoys.

The other distinguishing characteristic of Bing's style, of course, is its unfailing naturalness. No other singer in popular music has been so consistently *relaxing*. In a way, this approach has been calculated. That is, although Crosby himself is unpretentious and at ease in all manner of situations, he also figured out, way back, that to achieve naturalness in music—a most conscious goal on his part—he had to consider himself "not as a singer so much as a phraser." That means, he once told critic George Simon, "I don't think of a song in terms of notes. I try to think of what it's saying, what it means, lyrically. That's how you get it to sound natural."

Interestingly, one of the most innovative and yet wholly natural sounding instrumentalists in jazz history—tenor saxophonist Lester Young—used somewhat the same approach. "I always learn the lyrics of any piece I'm going to play," Lester Young told me years ago, "so that I really know what the story is all about. Then it comes out like you're telling a story, not just playing notes."

It may be that Bing's naturalness is a primary reason why, at 72, he is still a singer of such mellow zest and playful wit. As in a new release on the London label, *Feels Good/Feels Right*, recorded last year in England. Backed by a crisp studio orchestra, Crosby ranges with springy authority through swingers and ballads, from venerable standards like *Old Fashioned Love* and *As Time Goes By* to such more recent numbers as *The Way We Were*. Crosby, by the way, keeps up with the newer pop/rock composers, admiring such of them as James Taylor and Carole King. "It's kind of hard for me to learn some of the new songs," Crosby says, "because the construction is different. But once I do, my style is the same. It fits any song."

It fits any song because Bing always finds the natural phrasing for any song. A retrospective illustration of that easeful capacity is *Bing Crosby: A Legendary Performer* (RCA). Starting with a 1928 *Ol' Man River* with Paul Whiteman's extensive orchestra, there are sessions with Duke Ellington and Gus Arnheim, along with a whole side of 1957 dates with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band (including *Whispering* and *Down Among the Sheltering Palms*). What comes through, in all the diverse settings, is the continuing sense of wonder of this once and former kid drummer in Spokane who did get into the magical company of jazz musicians and then went on to become a very rich man by just doing what he wanted to—having fun with music.

"It amazes me," Bing told me, "that people keep on coming to hear me sing after all these years." They come because he's a natural—and there aren't many of those in music in a generation. Or in more than a generation. □

POETRY READING

The reading of winning poems of "DISCOVERY—THE NATION, 1977" (four are published in this issue), will be held on Monday, May 2, at 8 P.M. at The Poetry Center, YM-YWHA, 92nd St. and Lexington Ave. Those interested in this prize-winning contest are cordially invited to attend.

Grace Schulman, Poetry Editor

classified

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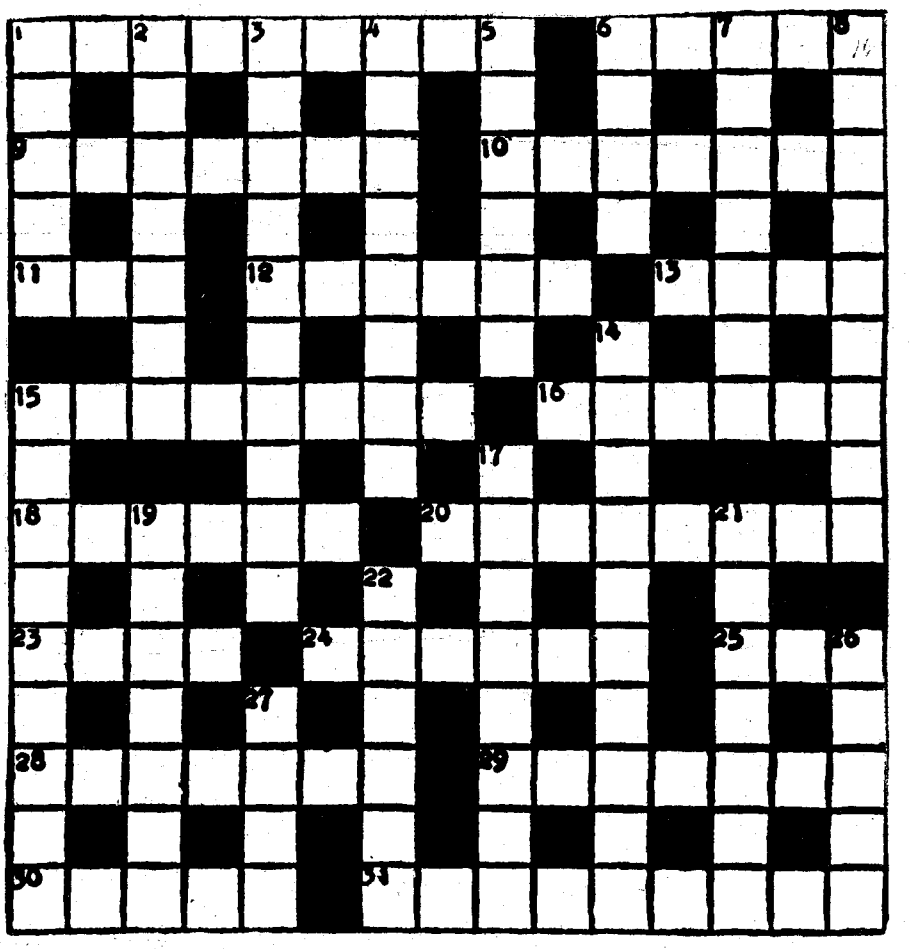

ACROSS

1 For the record, this is a revolver that might demonstrate how to get the better of one who has the drop on you. (9)
6 See 11 across
9 How to solicit information from the in-laws concerning the last change for the midnight coach. (7)
10 The fundamental concept of "Roots"?
11, 13 and 6 across Equal to an average ruler over three feet long, used for measuring the stays. (7,5)
12 Scenting trouble, and breaking into song in consequence. (6)
13 See 11 across
15 The sort of pains exemplified by a ham actor? (8)
16 A patch on the neck or gullet coming to a sort of junction. (6)
18 Due to a person who has bonds? (6)
20 Cut to pieces. (8)
23 Tunes affected manners and broadcasts.
24 In a clumsy way, move cut wood and such. (6)
25 and 27 down Would they, if mine were attacked? (You can't see them with limbs hanging down.) (7)
28 An element of the Greek heavens? (7)
29 I might make this a curious sort—loud and rowdy. (7)
30 Reduces the strain, and sees a way to make it. (5)
31 Tears around the right or left half of livers, in a sense. (9)

DOWN

1 What you might put in your car, if convertible, or do to the oil. (3,2)
2 Proving some err badly, with concern for past misdeeds. (7)
3 Leaving some, by implication, but still acting this way. (6,4)
4 Puts a ring around a person like a drummer, perhaps. (8)
5 Make a mistake with a worker in the middle of the shift? (6)
6 and 15 down What a ruler is prepared for? (Clothes should be fitting this way.) (4-2-7)
7 Part of the bedding supply should be going like clockwork! (7)
8 Assigned to an inferior position—for example, put in what your cousins are. (9)
14 Visitors might unexpectedly regain awareness after being down and out. (4,6)
15 See 6 down
17 One shouldn't call Respighi's music strictly for these. (3,5)
19 Burnt as a result of headdress design. (7)
21 Nothing in a mythical beast suggests an old soldier. (7)
22 A good time of year in which to find such as the adder? (6)
26 How one perhaps thinks of certain goddesses. (5)
27 See 25 across

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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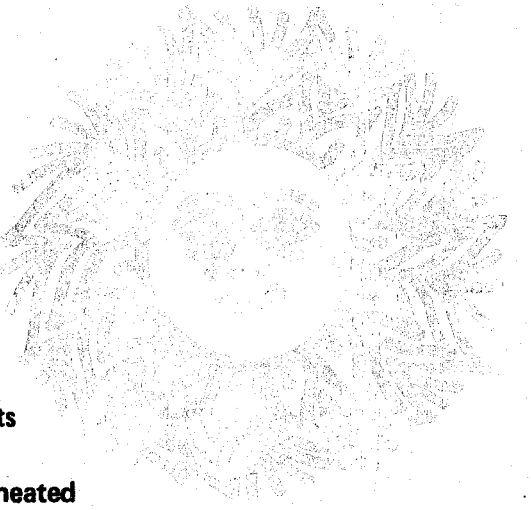

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